

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

## Lurilla Harris 1930—2016



Our July 19th meeting will be a celebration, memorial, and pot-luck lunch in honor of Lurilla Harris, a beloved member of Gray Panthers, Senior & Disability Action, OWL-SF, and the St. Frances Church. Lurilla was tragically killed on Thursday, June 9, when she was struck and killed by the Paratransit van she had taken on her way to the June Senior & Disability Action meeting.

**Tuesday, July 19, Noon – 3PM, MLK Room  
Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin (at Geary)**

New members elected to the Gray Panthers Board at our our June 21 membership meeting are: Deetje Boler, Denise D'Anne, Joileen Richardson, Kaye Griffin, and Michael Lyon and Lotus Yee Fong.

**Wed, July 6, Gray Panthers Board:** 1 PM, Main Library, 3rd Fl, Paley Rm.

**Thurs, July 7, Gray Panthers Newsletter Meeting:** 1 PM, GP Office, 2940 16th St, Rm 200-3, by 16th St. BART

**Fri, July 15, Gray Panthers Remember Robeson Committee Meeting.** 1:30 PM, GP Office.

**Tues, July 19, Gray Panthers Meeting: Memorial and Pot Luck for Lurilla Harris.** See above.

**Wed, July 20, SF Gray Panther Newsletter Meeting #2.** 1 PM, GP Office.

**Mon, July 25, Gray Panther Book Club.** 11:30 AM, Celtic Café, 142 McAllister, betw Hyde & Leavenworth. Please call 415-931-1126 to confirm.

## LURILLA HARRIS

It is always a surprise to hear of such wonderful backgrounds of people we have lost. Lurilla Harris stands out as one of those people who contributed so much to our community but few knew the extent of her contributions.

An article in the Bernal Journal of April 1987 encapsulated Lurilla Harris' life. It was titled *Lurilla Harris Wears a Lot of Hats*. It said, "Socially conscious, energetic, hilarious, caring and intellectually curious, this is not bachelor #3 on The Dating Game, but your editor." See the picture below.

Lurilla was certainly curious. She took her curiosity and sometime her opinions to various organizations, such as CARA, Senior & Disability Action, OWL, and Gray Panthers. She was constantly on the go using her overloaded walker and the services of Paratransit to navigate around the city. I met her once late at night as I was coming from a book club event on a Paratransit vehicle. I asked Lurilla what she was doing on Paratransit late at night. Her reply was that she was going all day long attending different meetings.

She was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and received a B.A. from Tulane University in English/Journalism. She worked for newspapers, fashion magazines, law journals and medical publications, including editing the *Bernal Journal* and 30 years at the *SF Chronicle* as proofreader .

Lurilla was no stranger to the bumps in life. On one occasion, she was thrown off her scooter, breaking 5 ribs, skinning her elbows and knees, and other injuries. When we called her, she said "Don't send sympathy, send chocolate!"



## June Members Meeting

We were privileged to welcome Gerald Cauthen, PE and Transportation Consultant, to speak to us regarding San Francisco Municipal Transit Authority. He knows more about it than he had time to cover, as he has a long history of involvement in SF planning of transit matters. He is co-founder of San Francisco Tomorrow, SaveMuni, and the Bay Area Transportation Working Group, and former Train Riders Association of California President, so he is well qualified to critique present transportation plans for San Francisco.

He focused on the Mayor's sidetracking of the longstanding plan to connect the Caltrain Station at 4<sup>th</sup> Street by a 1.3-mile-long tunnel to the now ready-and-waiting excavated passenger terminal under the Transbay Transit Center (TTC) at First and Mission. When completed, this new TTC/DTX connection will cause tens of thousands of Peninsula and San Francisco motorists to shift from car to train.

However, the Mayor's planners and Mission Bay developers say they have other ideas in mind. They've dreamed up a Feasibility Study (RAB) that could fatally delay the TTC/DTX connection to downtown by threatening the Federal funding now in place.

Cauthen pointed out that the staffs of Caltrain and the California High-Speed Rail Authority are understandably opposed to this idea. So would the 69% of San Francisco voters who 16 years ago voted for Proposition F to make a downtown Caltrain terminus their highest transportation priority, bringing needed relief from traffic congestion. (For more detail, see his article, "Don't pull brake cord on downtown Caltrain service" in *SF Examiner*, p. 17, 6/23/2016.)

In our ensuing discussion, Cauthen agreed to work together with us. Numerous other concerns were raised regarding Muni and Paratransit service. These ranged from needing more buses, more bus stops, more bus shelters, in order adequately to serve all riders' needs -- prioritizing comprehensive rather than speedy service.

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(June Membership Meeting, cont. from page 2)

We are grateful for Cauthen's long-time leadership for the transit benefits we presently enjoy. He urged we all contact Mayor Ed Lee (415-554-6141, [mayoredwinlee@sfgov.org](mailto:mayoredwinlee@sfgov.org)), and members of the Board of Supervisors (415-554-5184, [board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org](mailto:board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org)) to "demand they honor the mandate of the people of San Francisco as expressed in Prop H in 1999 by completing the DTX Project without further delay."

## Contracting Out

"When You Dial 911 and Wall Street Answers": *NY Times* headline (6/25/2016) This three-page investigative report is about private equity taking over community services with unfortunate results, as when in the case of Mt. Vernon, New York their mayor said that "private equity has, in this case, threatened public safety." -- and remember the case of the water in Flint, Michigan! The Times story cites further examples and goes on at length exposing the ongoing rampant privatization of government services, the international size of the corporations and lending institutions involved, etc.

Our version here in San Francisco came when Lurilla Harris dialed SF Paratransit and Transdev answered.

She was discharged at her destination, then died under the wheels of Transdev's transit van that she had just got out of. There has been minimal media coverage of this incident, despite Vision Zero.

Last month the MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) signed a 5-year contract with Transdev, an international corporation, for \$143 million to run Paratransit services. That's \$25.5 million a year. How many additional Muni drivers would that pay for? Union drivers, that is -- as opposed to Transdev's drivers, who are neither well paid nor union. Surprise, surprise!

As was commented by a retired Muni driver at our meeting re SFMTA (see report elsewhere in this newsletter), the drivers of the Paratransit vans should be union Muni drivers. If this means cancelling the contract with Transdev and hiring union Muni drivers, employees of the City and County of San Francisco, then so be it.

## Want To Help?

You are invited to join with the present members of our Newsletter Committee to help put out our monthly Gray Panthers of San Francisco newsletter. It is written, edited and produced by the members of the committee to reflect our values and concerns.

As a participant you could write articles on subjects of interest to you and/or could help copy edit, put together the newsletter, help print it, and/or process its bulk mailing (collate, fold, label copies). Anyone familiar with Microsoft Publisher would be particularly welcome to help format and print.

Typically, articles are written at home and are a half-column to a full column in length (185-370 words). We meet at the office two to three afternoons a month for the processing. Members may attend as many or as few of these as needed. It's rewarding effort, with visible results, and we try to make it fun.

Please leave a message at the office (415-552-8800) if you are interested, or e-mail [graypanther-sf@sonic.net](mailto:graypanther-sf@sonic.net)

## One-liners from *The Week*

"51% of Americans favor repealing the Affordable Care Act, while 48% want to keep in place. Given a 3rd option, 58% would prefer to replace the ACA with a federally-funded healthcare program providing insurance for all Americans"

'Mohammed Ali Abdullah Bwazir, recently cleared for release after 14 years inside Guantanamo, refused the chance to relocate to a European country, choosing to behind bars."

"The Senate passed a bill that would allow 9/11 victims and families to sue Saudi Arabia for any role it had in the 9/11 terror attacks"

"The man with the best job in the country is the Vice-President; all he has to do is to get up every morning and ask 'How's the President?'" Will Rogers.

## How to Save Electricity, Water, and Gas

California's current drought has been billed as the driest period in the state's recorded rainfall history. Drought is common in California. According to tree ring readings, California has experienced drought periods as long as 200 years.

A person's water footprint attributed to power production in the US averages 39 gallons per day.

Devices you can install to reduce electricity and water use: LED and fluorescent (CLF) light bulbs. Power strips for electrical equipment and then turn off the strips when equipment is not in use. Water savings devices in your shower and kitchen sink. Also collect shower water in a bucket for watering your garden or for flushing your toilet. Where feasible, use collected dishwater. (See picture below.)

You can reduce hot water use when washing your hands or dishes. Scrape dishes into compost, then soap and rinse using hot water at intervals instead of running hot water continuously.

You can cook with less water using microwave. For example, corn on the cob: Microwave each ear of corn for 3 minutes. Corn comes out fully cooked and more delicious because of the husks. Simply peel off the husks when corn is cooled. Microwave baked potatoes. No water, no gas. Type in Google "cooking potatoes in a microwave" for several recipes. With a little imagination and Google as your guide you probably can find other ways to cook without water or gas.



Valve for sink, shower, or basin allows easy one-hand use, yet you keep your temperature setting.

## Scalia vs. Class Action Suits

Class action suits enable several plaintiffs with claims too small to practicably file as individuals to join together and pursue their common grievance against the defendant. This can provide relief to the plaintiff and can establish legal precedence for future claims. They are an extremely valuable remedy in the area of civil rights violations.

Justice Antonin Scalia wrote the opinions for the majority of the Court when it denied class action certification to women claiming gender discrimination by Walmart in June of 2011. Scalia also wrote the majority opinions of the Supreme Court in the 2011 AT&T v. Concepcion case and in the 2013 American Express vs. Italian Colors Restaurant case. In these decisions, Scalia wrote in favor of the defending corporations that were appealing lower court decisions that had favored the class. In the Concepcion case, the plaintiffs were contesting the money they were being charged in the form of taxes for the supposedly "free" phones AT&T was offering. In the Italian Colors case, Italian Colors was using the Sherman Anti-Trust Act to contest fees American Express was charging its clients.

While the lower courts ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, the Supreme court sided with the defendants and held plaintiffs could pursue only arbitration in the AT&T case and only individual relief in the American Express case. Scalia wrote that while "the law offers a remedy, it does not guarantee the affordability of filing a claim."

Larry Paradis is the Executive Director of Disability Rights Advocates in Berkeley, California. Paradis says, "the class action mechanism has been critical to enforcement of the rights of people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. We have used the class action device to achieve systemic relief where individuals, if they brought suit just on their own behalf, could only get a very small piece of the problem fixed. By grouping people together in a class, we were able to get BART to modify its policies and practices throughout the system and implement fixes to thousands of barriers. So without class action remedy, the ADA and other laws simply don't get enforced on a systemic basis."



## Movie Review: *The Free State of Jones*

By Gray Panther Harold Bell

I went with a friend yesterday to see *The Free State of Jones* in the Lodi cinema. We both thought it was an excellent movie. It was the true story of a man named Newton Knight who was a poor non-slave owning farmer in Jones County Mississippi.

In the Confederate Army his job was to rescue wounded soldiers. He saw how the army treated ordinary soldiers differently from the officers. He was also outraged at the preferential treatment given the slave owning class: men were exempt from military service if they owned 40 or more slaves. It was called the rich man's war but the poor man's fight. (Like modern times!)

After a few run-ins with the Confederate Army's procurement unit, Newton Knight had to go into hiding in the nearby swamps. A woman ex-slave led him to where ex-slaves and deserters from the army were hiding.

From there they organized an underground fighting force that challenged the army of the slave owners. The soldiers from the State of Jones were integrated: black, white, men, women, young, old.

They fought the Confederates until the war's end. The movie takes us through the Reconstruction Era, and the rise of the KKK and Jim Crow Mississippi.

The movie leaves us with the problems of racism that we face today. This is a movie that is well worth seeing.

See <http://tinyurl.com/q7njt8p> for a review of the book *Bitterly Divided*, documenting rebellion and resistance within the Confederacy.



## There Goes the \$5 Chicken

By Denise D'Anne

There is much talk about restricting or deporting immigrants. So let's picture the US economy without immigrants.

Right off the bat there would not be any more \$5 roasted whole chicken that Costco offers. There would not be any more two pounds of strawberries or grapes for \$1 offered in my Mission District vegetable markets. We are currently complaining about the rise of food prices but the rise would be considerably more without the labor of immigrants from farms to meatpacking.

To be fair we should not even allow any exploitation of any workers. But somehow exploitation of "the other" is of little concern if we are able to purchase food needs cheaply. The ideal would be that all workers be required to belong to unions. Almost all workers are required to have Social Security cards. So why not union cards? This would eliminate exploitation of workers as well as raise the wages and dignity of workers. Our society should also insist that at the minimum all workers receive the highest living wage.

A study funded by the Cato Institute, a conservative public policy research organization, says immigration is beneficial. It claims "Immigration is not undermining the American experiment; it is an integral part of it. We are a nation of immigrants. Successive waves of immigrants have kept our country demographically young, enriched our culture and added to our productive capacity as a nation, enhancing our influence in the world."



Gray Panthers at the huge May Day march for worker and immigrant rights in 2006

## 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*

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Call the office for membership information.

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## Non-Gray Panther Actions and Events

(Complete on-line Calendar at <http://tinyurl.com/ce2gy6enb>)

**Sat, July 2 - Sun, July 31: Laborfest.**

Schedule: <http://tinyurl.com/hyozp2s>

**Mon, July 4, 2 PM, SF Mime Troupe Opening Show, *Schooled*:** Free-Market for-profit education goes hog wild. Dolores Park, Dolores & 18th St.

**Wed, July 6, 5 PM, Police Commission, Investigate Amilcar Perez's Killing!:** Police tampered with crime scene after killing him. SF City Hall, Rm 400.

**Tues, July 12, 7 PM, Revolutionary Poets Brigade, *Reclaiming Working Class Communities*:** Includes Gray Panther member Karen Melander-Magoon. Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin, at Geary.

**Wed, July 13, 11 AM, Senior & Disability Action's Health Action Team Meeting.** 1010 Mission at 6th St.

**Thurs, July 14, 10AM - 2PM, CARA Empowered Elders Training Program:** Protecting you and your rights in medical emergencies, hospitals, and end-of-life medical care. Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin, at Geary.

**Wed, July 20, 1 PM, Senior & Disability Action's Housing Collaborative Meeting:** 4th Floor, 1360 Mission, near 10th St. Demanding housing for all in SF.

**Wed, July 20, 6 PM, SF Living Wage Coalition Meeting:** Rm 301, 2940 16th St, at Capp, 1 block from 16th St. BART

**Thurs, July 21, 12 Noon, Planning Commission, No More Luxury Units in the Mission!:** City Hall, Rm 400

**Sat, July 23, 10 AM, OWL-SF Meeting:** Please call 415-989-4422 for program topic and location.