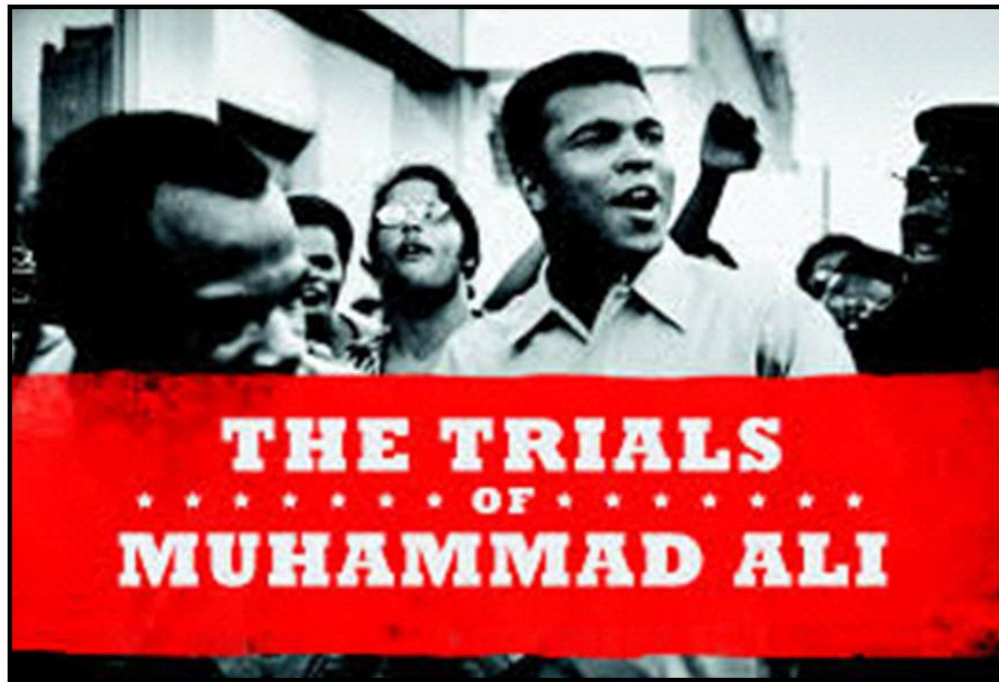


# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



## Gray Panthers Night at the Movies Saturday, August 27, 6 PM

Western Park Apts, 1280 Laguna, between Eddy & Ellis  
Pizza, Salad, Popcorn, Donation Requested, Wheelchairs OK  
Kick off your shoes and relax in good company!

*The Trials of Muhammad Ali* covers the explosive cross-roads of Ali's life. His conversion to Islam and refusal to serve in the Vietnam War left him banned from boxing and facing five years in prison.

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

**Thurs, Aug 4, Gray Panthers Newsletter Meeting:** 1 PM, GP Office, 2940 16th St, Rm 200-3, by 16th St. BART.

**Wed, Aug 17 SF Gray Panthers Newsletter Meeting #2:** 1 PM, GP Office, 2940 16th St, Rm 200-3, by 16th St. BART.

**Fri, Aug 19, Gray Panthers Remember Robeson Committee Meeting:** 1:30 PM, GP Office, 2940 16th St, Rm 200-3.

**Sat, Aug 27, Gray Panthers at the Movies, *ALI*:** 6 PM, 1280 Laguna, See above.

**Mon, Aug 29, Gray Panthers Book Club:** 11:30 AM, Celtic Café, 142 McAllister, betw Hyde & Leavenworth. Please call 415-931-1126 to confirm.

## Lurilla Harris Celebration/Memorial

Some eighty people gathered July 19 to remember and celebrate Lurilla Harris, 86, who was fatally struck by a paratransit van on June 9 in front of the Unitarian Center on her way to a Senior & Disability Action meeting. Many spoke of improving Paratransit. People from an amazing variety of groups came with Lurilla stories:

- \* Gray Panthers, Senior/Disability Action, OWL.
- \* Walk SF, Vision Zero, auto accident survivors group, SF Paratransit Board, MTA.
- \* An animal care group where she trapped feral cats, vaccinated them, taught others to do it. Worked on animal welfare projects, and advocated for pet safety with the City, brought pet raccoon on plane from New York saying it was a cat.
- \* Was Bernal Journal Editor, SF Chronicle proof-reader in Local 2, edited children's book.
- \* Was a regular at UU Forum, attended movies at St. Mary's; and read poetry (sometimes her own) at Jewish Community Center.
- \* Active for years in stroke survivors support group, checked ADA-compliance of all branch libraries, helped Single-Payer Now mailings.
- \* She had a chair reserved for jazz performances at Bird & Beckett, and attended most free concerts.

Lurilla was everywhere. She will be missed.



July 8th: youth-led march blocks off Market Street in protest of police killing of Philando Castile in Minnesota and Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge.

## A Broken Taillight

By Representative Barbara Lee

Alton Sterling was a husband and a father of five children. He was shot at point-blank range by police outside of a convenience store in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on Tuesday.

Philando Castile was a son, nephew, and boyfriend. He was killed by police in his vehicle in Falcon Heights, Minnesota on Wednesday with his girlfriend in the passenger seat and 4-year-old daughter in the back seat.

With an ever-growing list of African Americans who have been killed by police, it is clear we have much more to do to advance justice and peace in our communities, accountability for police officers who use lethal force, and equality for our African American friends, family members and neighbors.

It is difficult to fathom how, time and time again, video evidence of police brutality does not result in justice for the families of the victims. It is even more difficult to comprehend and bear witness to the apparent disregard for African American lives.

A broken tail light. A toy gun at a park. Failing to signal a lane change.

These, along with so many others, are the mundane circumstances that spur police violence against African American men, women and children.

It is time that we put a system in place to hold police officers accountable for using lethal force and demand a Department of Justice investigation each time an officer shoots and kills a civilian.

Law enforcement officials have a very difficult job, and the vast majority of them do not use their power to inflict harm on others. But when a police officer kills someone, there must be an impartial investigation so that he or she is held accountable.

It is unacceptable to have a justice system that barely ever prosecutes or convicts police officers who commit murder on the job. And it is unacceptable when a law enforcement official employs an excessive use of force that results in death.

The families of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile deserve justice. Black lives matter.

## Let's Fix MTA

Serious basic flaws in SF Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) management of Muni transit and Paratransit services require serious basic reforms -- preferably removing the management of Muni and Paratransit from SFMTA's purview so that they will be more directly under the City's and citizens' control. Since MTA's authority is so broad, including traffic and parking, the conflicts between autos' and bus riders' needs are settled within the Authority, without adequate citizens' and Supervisors' oversight. As a result, SFMTA's authority is out of control and citizens' input is ignored.

Recent and pending cutbacks in bus routes, in numbers of bus stops and in frequency of buses need to be canceled, with the prior service levels restored. In addition, more frequent buses to relieve over-crowding and more bus stops to improve accessibility are needed. This is called comprehensive planning. At present, MTA's primary objective seems to be how fast a bus can get from its origin to its last stop, pressuring the drivers to speed up.

Notices of temporary re-routings and/or public hearings have been seriously lacking. (Readers are advised to complain to 311). The result is patrons helplessly waiting at bus stops without knowing that no bus is coming, or not knowing there's a hearing regarding a proposed change to go to. Actually the hearings are a waste of time because the input is mostly ignored by the planners who are focused on their grand plans (e.g., pending BRT projects) rather than the patrons' more immediate transit concerns.

The long-range and even immediate objective, of course, is to get people out of their private vehicles and onto public transit. This requires conveniently accessible, more frequent and less-crowded buses (Mission Street, for a prime example of over-crowding).

Furthermore, SFMTA's management of Paratransit service for the seriously disabled, which they have contracted out to a private corporation (Transdev), has a long and continuing history of operational problems that now very unfortunately include a tragic death. According to Annette Williams, Man-

ager of Accessible Services at MTA, the Transdev drivers, though union, begin at \$18/hour. You can draw your own conclusions, but it would seem better to have more direct control by the City over personnel selection, wages, tenure and training, number and upkeep of vehicles, communication systems, etc., and to improve safety, responsiveness and reliability.

**Anyone interested in working with a committee to achieve improvements to public transit please leave your contact info at the Gray Panthers office, 415-552-8800. We'll get back to you. Let's make Lurilla's voice heard!**

### **Have you paid your membership dues?**

Gray Panther membership dues are \$30/year, more if you can afford it, less if you can't. Please check your mailing label to see your current status. Our address is on last page.

### **One-liners from *The Week***

This column of newsbites is inspired by the 90's GP newsletter edited by Lurilla. It is intended to update our community with information relevant to our concerns--and to amuse.

\*\*\* A survey from Public Policy Polling revealed that 13% of potential voters would prefer to have a giant meteor crash into the Earth and destroy civilization than to see either Hillary or Trump living in the White House.

\*\*\* NASA's Juno spacecraft entered into an orbit of Jupiter after a five year trip. It was one minute late. One of its goals is to learn the recipe for the solar systems; Jupiter was the first planet to coalesce from the gas and dust that formed our solar system.

\*\*\* Regarding the fact that the six largest economies will soon be led by women, T. Bate, Editor of *The Week* commented; "Anyone who hopes that the new wave of leaders will usher in an era of gentler politics will be disappointed. Women, like men, are complicated and not all the same."

\*\*\* Eight months before the Iraq invasion, Blair had already promised then-President Bush in a secret note; "I'll be with you, whatever".

\*\*\* Voltaire: "To learn who rules you, simply find out who you are not allowed to criticize."



## On the Orlando Massacre

From Wikipedia: “On June 12, Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old security guard, killed 49 people and wounded 53 others in a terrorist attack—also considered a hate crime—inside Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. He was shot and killed by Orlando police after a three-hour standoff. Pulse was hosting Latin Night and most of the victims were Hispanic. It was both the deadliest mass shooting by a single shooter and the deadliest incident of violence against LGBT people in U.S. history.”

The SEIU Lavender Caucus wrote, “We will continue to stand united as we strive to eradicate any injustices discrimination or other oppressors or oppressions that plague our LGBTQI communities.”

Gray Panther Denise D’Anne writes, “I agree with the Lavender Caucus that Orlando was a horrendous tragedy perpetrated against our gay community. One thing not mentioned is the effect of the U.S. perpetual wars; they engender and foster terrorist groups. These wars are now used by many sick minds to justify further terror on our own soil and elsewhere.”

Denise continues, “Remember: U.S. is not only fueling wars but is also giving or selling billions of dollars worth of weapons to regimes that abuse, torture, and kill their own people. These regimes also single out those of the LGBTQ community. We are all complicit when we don't call out our government's foreign policies and those of its undemocratic allies or those who claim to be democracies but use apartheid tactics.”



Vigil on Castro in response to Orlando shooting

## “Liberals” Also Oppose Single-Payer

Gray Panther Ruthanne Shpiner interviewed Dr. Adam Gaffney, who is a pulmonary and critical care physician and writes on healthcare policy and politics. Gaffney explored his claim that liberals, too, argue against introducing a single-payer healthcare system in his March, 2016 piece for *The New Republic* titled 'How Liberals Tried to Kill the Dream of Single-Payer.'

He wrote that establishment liberals say single-payer is politically and economically impossible. Widely-read NY Times economist Paul Krugman wrote that single-payer “isn’t a political possibility,” and sociologist Paul Starr said single-payer is a “hopeless crusade for a proposal that will go down to defeat again, as it has every time it has come up before.” Hillary Clinton said it would “will never, ever come to pass.”

But Gaffney claims that despite economic critiques from both the left and right, “Many studies have been done showing that single-payer is affordable. With the hundreds of billions of dollars in administrative savings and the savings on pharmaceutical drugs, we could easily afford to cover everybody in the country without breaking the system, just as many other countries have done.”

Gaffney also claims that there are political in addition to these economic reasons that liberals are opposing single-payer:

He said, “Whereas conservatives tend to stick to their positions, liberals are too quick to cave. He cites the Reagan/Thatcher strategy of the 1970s and 1980s saying “in those years when conservatives were out of power to some extent, conservatives stuck with a very ambitious, conservative agenda and then when they got power, they were able to implement it with Reagan in the U.S. and Thatcher in the U.K.”

He continued, “I think in contrast, liberals have steadily walked away from many of their core proposals. Single-payer was one of those core proposals from the 1950s onward and I think that strategy has been a big mistake. The Republicans have moved further right and the liberals have moved further to the center and as a result, we haven't had the kind of real healthcare reform that we need.”

## Workers' Pensions Under Attack

In the latest wrinkle in the attack on workers' pensions, the *Wall Street Journal* notes that on December 16, 2014, President Barack Obama signed into law sweeping changes to the law that governs multiemployer pension plans. The Multiemployer Pension Reform Act (MPRA) was slipped in as part of the Omnibus Government Budget and Spending Bill.

Multiemployer pensions are defined-benefit pension plans negotiated between a union and several employers. The roughly 10 million workers covered move from job to job and are typically in the building trades, hotel and restaurant workers, trucking, and nurses. Before, Federal pension law allowed companies to cut retirement plans for active workers, but shielded those already retired from pension cuts. This "reform" allows troubled multiemployer pension plans to ask pension regulators for significant cuts in benefits for current retirees. Some plans become underfunded as employers go out of business and stop contributing to the funds, while the company's retirees are still drawing from the funds.

The MPRA bill has real world effect on retirees who rely on their pensions for old-age security. In fact, workers spent most of their working lives paying into these pension plans. Some workers' pensions have already been cut by 50%. Some who thought they would have a secure future are now scrambling to find jobs in order to maintain their living standards.

Plan trustees are the ones who decide how to allocate the cuts. For example, they can cut retirees' benefits more than those of active workers, and they can decide whether and how much to reduce benefits for early retirement and surviving spouses.

There is a move by pensioners and workers to ask Congress to reverse MPRA by passing "Keep Our Pension Promises Act." The wealthiest country in the world can do better.

A Fact: For one dollar of assets owned by a woman of color, a member of the Forbes 400 has over \$40 billion.

## ***FIXIT: Be Careful What We Wish For!***

By Michael Lyon

The movie *FIXIT* is eloquent about how for-profit healthcare is eating the economy alive, with tragic results to both individuals and society. It's clear that instead of the free-market free-for-all, we, the 99%, need universal, equal, comprehensive healthcare, without insurance companies. How to get it?

*FIXIT* is being shown to business groups, hoping to engage them in getting rid of insurance companies to reduce their costs. Even after that happens, though, there would still be huge profits and therefore huge costs, in drugs, hospital chains, durable medical equipment, nursing homes, and other sectors of healthcare. With insurance gone, would business be satisfied and not demand further cost reductions, this time in actual healthcare?

We *hope* that by being the sole purchaser of healthcare we could control costs. But we're not strong enough now to force corporations to accept negotiated drug prices for Medicare, let alone Medicare-for-All. Instead, Obama is controlling Medicare drug costs by tolerating high prices but restricting access to expensive new cancer drugs.

Medicare administrative expenses are very low, but we haven't been strong enough to stop rising prices for drugs, hospitalization, equipment, etc. So now corporations are saying we use too much healthcare and we need to pay more out-of-pocket, to have "more skin in the game."

Really, there would still be the same struggle between the interests of corporations and patients that there is in Medicare now. Healthcare corporations would still want to raise their prices, and reduce their cost of services. And *all* corporations would still want to reduce their taxes for Medicare-for-All, just as they do now with Medicare.

Yes, we will eventually have to overcome corporate opposition, but *now* is the time when we need to build our own strength, not cooperate with corporations. Part of getting stronger is being clear that our interests are not the same as business's.

So let's watch *FIXIT* as it shows the chaos and cruelty of the entire for-profit healthcare system and renew our commitment to universal, equal, comprehensive healthcare as a human right, not a source of profit. And not partner with business.

## 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*

ADDRESS SERVICE  
REQUESTED

Call the office for membership information.

Printed In House August 2016

## Non-Gray Panther Actions and Events

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

**Wed, Aug 3, Sacramento Mobilization:  
Overtime Pay for Domestic Workers:**  
See <http://tinyurl.com/zle8yc9> . For  
Bay Area buses: call 510-590-8253.

**Thurs, Aug 4, 1 PM, Protect 24th Street  
from Luxury Development:** Planning  
Comm., City Hall, Rm 400. See <http://tinyurl.com/hh4gsxy>

**Thurs, Aug 4, 7 PM, “What Happened  
at Demo Convention, What’s Next?”**  
7 PM, Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin.

**Wed, Aug 10, 11 AM, Senior & Dis-  
ability Action’s Health Action Team  
Meeting:** 1010 Mission at 6th St.

**Sat, Aug 13, 2 PM, Helen Caldicott,  
“Nuclear Weapons, Can They Be Abol-  
ished?”:** SF Main Library, Koret Audit.,  
Lower Level, 100 Larkin.

**Wed, Aug 17, 1 PM, Senior & Disabil-  
ity Action’s Housing Collaborative  
Meeting:** 4th Floor, 1360 Mission, near  
10th St. Demand housing for all.

**Wed, Aug 17, 6 PM, SF Living Wage  
Coalition Meeting:** Rm 301, 2940 16th  
St, at Capp, 1 block from 16th St. BART

**Sat, Aug 27, 10 AM, OWL-SF Meet-  
ing:** Please call 415-989-4422 for pro-  
gram topic and location.

**Thurs, Sept 8, 10 AM, CARA Candi-  
date & Town Hall Forum on Senior Is-  
sues:** Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin.