

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

## ***Help Decide: What Should SF Gray Panthers Do in 2017?***

**Tuesday, January 17, 1-3 PM**  
Fireside Room, Unitarian Center  
1187 Franklin St (at Geary)

**Free, Interested Public Invited, Wheelchairs OK**

The Trump regime has made it clear that they intend to erase our gains of the past 75 years. Trump intends to impose a reign of repression, hate, austerity, and movement toward war. On the other hand, there is resistance we have not seen for decades. How do we fit into this picture, and what can we do?

## **Protect, Preserve, and Expand Medicare and Medicaid**

**Wed, Jan 4, 6AM to 2 PM:** Join CARA's National Call-In Day to flood Congress's offices in Washington DC as Congress Opens. Call Toll-Free 866-828-4162 to Pelosi's and Speier's offices. More at <http://tinyurl.com/zuxrd5a>

**Fri, Jan 27, all day:** Join CARA's State-wide action at US House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy's office in Bakersfield. As House Leader, McCarthy pushes the GOP agenda in Congress, and supports privatization and big cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. We'll be at his office in big numbers to say NO WAY! Buses leaving from the SF Bay Area; call 877-223-6107. More at <http://tinyurl.com/hymfw2e>

**Mass Meeting: SF United Against Trump  
A Panel Discussion, A Speakout, and Making Plans to Fight Back  
Saturday, January 7, 1-4 PM  
Women's Building, 3543 18th St., SF**

Panelists will discuss how Trump's proposed attacks will affect their communities. We will open the floor for discussion regarding building solidarity to defend each other from bigotry, hate, and extreme austerity and poverty. We will discuss upcoming actions particularly during the presidential inauguration January 20 a 21, and plan future actions or events.

## Standing Rock Around the World

By Deetje Boler

The Standing Rock Sioux and 2000 or so supporting Water Protectors camped out to oppose the Dakota Access pipeline (DAPL). As I write this on Dec. 26, the water protectors are sitting through a blizzard with 5-foot drifts of snow. Fortunately, this historic resistance action is getting some mainstream reporting. Its great significance is not being entirely lost in the present bad news coverage.

This morning, Bernie Sanders on an hour-long Democracy Now special, KPFA.org outlined three reasons why he opposes DAPL: 1) First and foremost, flat-out, because it's a matter of Native Americans' historic Treaty rights, once again being discounted; 2) the threat to the water supply for many thousands from a possible burst pipe under the Missouri River; and 3) the pressing need to convert our energy sources from environmentally damaging fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. This program is highly recommended listening. KPFA also offers transcriptions to read.

Sanders also pointed out that he has written to the administration that the kind of military presence that has been in play is not acceptable.

Supporters of the Water Protectors are cropping up all over the nation and the world. Caty Powell of Gray Panther in Sonoma County tells of many in Sonoma County who are actively supporting the Water Protectors in Standing Rock. Although the Army Corps of Engineers, as a result of the ongoing nonviolent opposition, has for now put the completion of the pipeline on hold. Pending a full environmental review, continued vigilance is required as the investors (including Trump) have not given up their nefarious plans. Court actions are pending.

The article, "Standing Together," from the December 13 Sonoma County Bohemian that Caty forwarded to us (copy available upon request at 415-558-2800 or at <http://tinyurl.com/hd3mhr4>) quotes a local Dakota Sioux/Chippewa resident, Adam Villagomez, who drove to Standing Rock for a week's stay with his wife and three children: "Standing Rock is only the leading edge of a much larger spiritual-political phenomenon that involves recognition of indigenous sovereignty, water protection and climate change activism." Exact same 3 points that Bernie made, but with the additional

historical background: some of the power of the non-violent resistance stems from the 12/29/1890 massacre of 300 Lakota men, women and children at Wounded Knee, S.D., which to the Lakota effected the shattering of the 'Sacred Hoop': "My understanding is that the movement at Standing Rock is the fulfillment of multiple prophecies that involve our people coming together, standing up and mending the Sacred Hoop," Villagomez says. In short, there is deep historical/spiritual significance to this resistance that promises to give it special power.

A large number of corporate investors are funding this pipeline project. Wells Fargo is one. Numerous protests and demands for divestment have been made of Wells Fargo around the country, and another is sure to be planned soon. Can you be there to represent Gray Panthers' support of the Water Protectors? To say, "Can't drink oil?" To take part in history? Meanwhile, have you considered closing any account you may have at a big bank and switching to a community bank? Why not do that?

**Listen to Floyd Red Crow Westerman  
A performer of Truth Songs  
Singing "Custer Died for Your Sins"  
<http://tinyurl.com/zp5ouej>**



Lacota Water Defenders braved the December 6 blizzard with 50 mph wind gusts and wind-chill of -25° F, vowing to stay, and not trusting the Army's promise to reject the pipeline's route.

## Rebuild Local Communities

Barbara Lee & Denise D'Anne

Those of us who are concerned about global warming should not shop at Amazon, holiday or no holiday.

Amazon packaging includes the cutting of countless trees, the use of oil to ship, manufacture plastic and bubble wrap. Most Amazon products are made in other countries preventing homegrown products to get a foothold. The negative impact on our air quality and use of fuel is incalculable.

Some 36,000 robots at work in Amazon warehouses are replacing American jobs. Our U.S. postal labor force, now contracted to deliver Amazon packages day and night creates a physical strain on postal workers as they lug huge packages up stairs, across the street and ... On the other hand, shopping locally has many benefits. The community receives the taxes, money circulates within the community, and job opportunities increase. Consumers can view their purchases, try them on or return items easily. Personal relations develop and the sense of community enlivens our lives.

On-line shopping creates a monopoly that denies competition and ultimately results in price gauging.



On Friday, Dec 9th, we celebrated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by reading it at City Hall. The amended declaration includes a statement relevant today as the indigenous people continue their stand to protect their land from the environmental threat posed by the proposed Dakota Access pipeline. On September 13, 2007, the United Nations decreed that all indigenous people have the right to full enjoyment, that Federal and State governments are obligated to protect and fulfill the rights secured in Articles 1-40 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## Fidel Castro Presente

By Denise D'Anne

During the 50-year rule of Fidel Castro, the United States, through direct wars killed over 90,000 American soldiers. Over 1 million were wounded over the same period. The cost of all these wars was about \$6 trillion and climbing.

We know that some of these wars are ongoing. Deaths and wounded civilians targeted by the U.S. are in the millions. The U.S. routinely kills, maims and destroys communities on a regular basis.

This is not to ignore the casualties and deaths under the dictatorship of Fidel Castro but by the numbers there is no dispute. Americans, as is their inclination, have killed countless billions during its brief history on American soil.

Castro can be celebrated for his bringing education to the masses in Cuba. Although it is a poor country no one is without shelter. No one is without health care. And most of all Cuba has not invaded any country. What it has done is support countries under siege by U.S. backed racist governments. It helped liberate Angola. It also sent out doctors and teachers in numerous poor countries, such as Haiti during Hurricane Matthew even while Cuba was also hit by the hurricane.

It appears in contrast with the U.S. imperial militarism worldwide that Cuba, with all its faults, is close to paradise. Castro was an amassing leader who suffered some 600 attempts by the U.S. to assassinate him. What would be the reaction if other countries had a policy of assassinating heads of state in the U.S.?



Castro Sept, 1960, in NY City to address the UN General Assembly shortly after the Cuban revolution.

## SFMTA - Rein-In the Rogue Agency

By Deetje Boler

Paul Kozakiewics, a local neighborhood newspaper editor and president of the association of neighborhood newspapers, has a lengthy commentary in several neighborhood newspapers about SF Municipal Transit Authority (SFMTA) and Muni. The commentary, headlined "Rein-in Rogue Agency," calls for taking SFMTA apart and cites all their bad doings.

He wrote, "City voters crushed Prop, K, with about 2/3 of the voters saying "no" to giving more money to a rogue city agency hell-bent on destroying the character of the city's neighborhoods in the name of transportation progress." He goes on to list SFMTA's service cuts and changes all over the city. "It has become apparent to many city residents that the MTA needs to be reformed.... the way the MTA is set up now, the agency is responsible to no one. I could go on all day about the abuses perpetrated by the MTA..."

Kozakiewics continue saying it's time for the SF Civil Grand Jury to take a look, or that voters get the opportunity to vote for more accountability. He suggests that Mayor Lee and/or the Supes have more control over Muni . "A city agency ... should be responsive to the public it serves. A small cadre of planners and appointed directors who are not beholden to anyone should not be redesigning our neighborhoods. Can you name the members of the MTA? It's time we gain control over this rogue agency."

Let's pick up our neighborhood papers to keep informed about what's going on so we can begin picking up the pieces of this limping so-called democracy. How dare they eliminate at least 14 bus stops on Van Ness? How dare they plan to cut down 200 trees on Van Ness? We should insist they be retained. If you dial 311, a real person will answer, and you can speak your message and have it delivered to any City official you specify, such as the SFMTA Board Members. Saving Muni transit stops and getting Muni out from under SFMTA is a good campaign to stick our necks out for.

<b>S.O.S.</b>	<b>MAIL TODAY!</b>
	Engineering Public Hearing Sustainable Streets Division One South Van Ness Avenue 7th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103-5417
<b>Save our N Judah Stops!</b>	

## GP's Post-Election Political Roundtable

On November 19 a Post-Election Political Roundtable was held at the University of San Francisco. In spite of a stormy afternoon, the room was filled beyond capacity, and nearly 200 attended. Most of the meetings at the time were sharing grief or chagrin over the Trump election, and it was great to get together to instead share anger and determination to fight the Trump agenda.

The event was initiated by the Gray Panthers and co-sponsored by the SF Progressive Democrats of America SF Berniecrats, and SF Vision, and the panel of political analysts and activists included: Lawrence Shoup, author of Wall Street's Think Tank, Peter Dale Scott, author of The American Deep State, Stephen Zunes, author of Tinderbox, David Talbot, founder of Salon Magazine, and Peter Phillips, author of Project Censored. Rebecca Gordon, author of American Nuremberg, got sick at the last minute, and Cheryl Davila, newly-elected to the Berkeley City Council had to cancel.



Watch it at: <http://tinyurl.com/gsamg92>

The panel, put together before the election, was to discuss power in the United States--where it resides, who has it, how are decisions made and enforced, and what forms it is likely to assume in the coming period. We, like the media pundits, blithely assumed the election would be an ordinary, orderly handing of power from one hand of the established elite to another. The Trump election upset these assumptions, and, not surprisingly, dominated the discussion of the panelists and especially the questions from the audience, which occupied at least half the afternoon.

Audience members expressed a desire for another meeting. We don't want to duplicate the meetings on action to take. We're planning a forum on US foreign relations and the move to war in March.

## Hands Off Social Security

Social Security, which has reduced senior poverty from 1/3 to 1/10, which has never missed a payment since its beginning in 1935, and which has a surplus of almost \$3 Trillion, is said to be on the verge of financial collapse. Lies! According to the 2016 Social Security Actuary, even if no changes were made, Social Security could maintain today's benefits for 20 more years, and 75-79% benefits after that. Scrapping the Cap, making high-earners pay into Social Security, would let it pay today's benefits forever.

Social Security's nearly \$3 Trillion surplus, paid by FICA deductions from our paychecks, is invested in US Treasury Bonds, considered the safest possible investment. By investing in US Treasury Bonds, Social Security loaned its surplus to the US Government. Unfortunately, the US Government did not put that money into infrastructure, education, scientific research, and health and welfare programs, to grow the economy and increase government revenue to pay Social Security back.

Instead the Government wasted the money on oil wars, bank bailouts, and tax cuts to the rich, accompanied by economic collapse and huge government debt. So now the Government cannot repay its debt to Social Security without either taking lots of money from the rich (God forbid!) or borrowing even more. In other words, the so-called Social Security fiscal crisis is really a government fiscal crisis, brought on by the same set of politicians and corporate think-tanks that now say seniors must lose benefits they paid for, because the government cannot re-pay Social Security. No Way! Make the bosses take the losses!

According to the Economic Policy Institute, HR 6489, by US Rep. Sam Johnson, R-Texas, chair of the Social Security subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, would: (1) gradually raise retirement age to 69 for those currently 49 or younger (a 13.5% across-the-board cut), (2) reduce retirees' initial payments an average of 9%, and (3) cut cost-of-living increases an average of 13%. Some long-lived beneficiaries could see cuts of 74%. See <http://tinyurl.com/jigypcb> .

There is a group funded by the notorious anti-"entitlement" Peter G Peterson Foundation to convince college students that Social Security is beyond repair. Its offices are nearby. Stay tuned.

## Protect, Improve, and Expand Medicare and Medicaid

Medicare provides healthcare to some 57 million seniors and people with disabilities, regardless of income, covering hospitalization (Part A), doctors visits and other outpatient services (Part B), and spotty assistance for buying medicines from private insurers (Part D). Approximately 1/3 of Medicare patients get these and other services through private "Medicare Advantage" (Part C) plans like Kaiser. Hospitalization (Pt A) is paid by workers through payroll deductions. Outpatient care (Pt B) and drug purchasing assistance (Pt D) are paid from the Federal General Fund, but Medicare is an "entitlement." Government must provide care for all eligible people, no matter what it costs.

Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) provides healthcare to some 73 million low-income adults, seniors, and particularly children, providing basic coverage for all aspects of healthcare. Federal Medicaid determines who must be covered and what services must be covered, and provides roughly half the financing, but the actual programs are administered by the States. About 1/3 of US births, and virtually all long-term care in the US is financed by Medicaid. 42% of California children are on Medicaid. Obamacare extended Medicaid to 16 million people below 138% of poverty level (\$33,000 for family of four) and paid at least 90% of costs in those 32 states that adapted expansion. Medicaid, too, is an "entitlement." Federal and State governments must pay for all eligible people.

Medicaid/Medi-Cal is in more immediate danger. Within weeks of 2017, Obamacare could be revoked, kicking the 16 million Medicaid Expansion people off Medicaid, and Medicaid could be "block granted," meaning states get a fixed amount no matter what they need, and states could restrict who and what services are covered. This could happen very fast because a Federal budget maneuver called "reconciliation" letting budget crunches change the design of entitlement programs.

Attacks on Medicare are slightly down the road, and include raising the eligibility age, and converting Medicare to a voucher program to buy private insurance whose yearly benefit would not cover even a single night in a hospital.

**Join CARA's fight against these plans on January 4 and January 27. See page 1.**

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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.

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## More Actions and Events

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

**Sat, Jan 7, 1-4 PM, SF United Against Trump Mass Meeting, See front page.**

**Tues, Jan 10, 6 PM, Campaign for A Healthy California Meeting, (Single Payer advocacy).** Call 415-235-0032 to RSVP and for location in Bernal Heights

**Thurs, Jan 12, 10 AM, Senior & Disability Action General Meeting:** Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin.

**Thurs, Jan 12, 1 PM, CARA SF CAT Meeting:** ILWU Office, 1188 Franklin

**Tues, Jan 17, 1 PM, Gray Panthers Meet. See page 1**

**Wed, Jan 18, 1 PM, Senior & Disability Action's Housing Collaborative Meeting:** 4th Floor, 1360 Mission, near 10th St. Demand housing for all.

**Wed, Jan 18, 6 PM, SF Living Wage Coalition Meeting:** Rm 301, 2940 16th St, at Capp, 1 block from 16th St. BART

**Fri, Jan 20, Inauguration Day, 5 PM, March from UN Plaza, Market & 7th St**

**Sat, Jan 21, 4-9 PM, Women's March in SF, 4 PM Civic Center; 6 PM, March to Justin Herman Plaza. Themes: human, civil rights, tolerance, compassion**

**Fri, Jan 27, CARA State-Wide Action in Bakersfield, Hands Off Medicare & Medicaid, See front page.**

**Sat, Jan 28, 10 AM, OWL-SF 2017 Planning Meeting:** 1125 Fillmore (Northern Police Station)

**Mon, Jan 30, 3-5 PM, Economic Security and Housing Among Older Adults.** UCSF Laurel Heights Auditorium, 3333 California