

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

April Gray Panther Meeting

The New Environmental / Climate Change Movement

Michael Eisenscher, The People's Climate Movement

Tuesday, April 18, 1 PM

Fireside Room, Unitarian Center

1187 Franklin (at Geary)

Open to All, Free, Wheelchairs OK

Special Events Coming Up

Fri, Apr 21, 12 Noon, **EPA: Environmental Science, Not Polluters' Profits**. 75 Hawthorne, downtown SF betw 2nd & 3rd Sts, Montgomery BART/MUNI.

Sat, Apr 22, 11 AM, **March for Science**, celebrating scientific knowledge as crucial for success, health, and safety. Rally Justin Herman Plaza, march to Civic Center.

Mon, Apr 17, 6:30 PM, **SF United Against Trump Meeting** on Importance of May Day in the Bay Area. Women's Building, 3543 18th St, betw Valencia & Guerrero.

Wed, Apr 26, all day, **Rally in Sacramento for Single-Payer Healthcare**, SB 562, which has its first legislative hearing today. Let's make insurance companies, with their denials, and their outrageous profits, a bad memory. Buses leaving from San Francisco mid-morning. Call 415-215-7575 for more details.

Sat, Apr 29, 11AM -5PM, **People's Climate Movement** - at Oakland's Lake Merritt Amphitheater, adjacent to 12th St, near Lake Merritt BART. Processional march around Lake, w. info booths, activities etc for Justice, Jobs, Peace, and the Planet.

Mon, May 1, **International Workers and Immigrant Rights Day**, various actions: SF: "A Day Without Immigrants," demanding immigrant rights and supporting a one-day state-wide strike by largely undocumented janitors, and other building-service workers, against ICE raids and anti-Muslim orders. 11AM, rally at Justin Herman Plaza, then march to Civic Center. Oakland: Sin Fronteras Immigrant Rights Coalition, 3 PM, rally at Fruitvale BART, then a (long) march to San Antonio Park.

Lynne Stewart, Friend of the Gray Panthers of SF

By Barbara Lee

On the occasion of her first visit to the Bay Area after being convicted of terrorism, Lynne was greeted by a large gathering of progressives at the Women's Building. An attorney with the National Lawyers' Guild sketched the court case; Bato, one of the San Quentin Six spoke of being hog-tied and tortured at San Quentin; then Lynne spoke eloquently of her experience in Judge Koeltl's court.

Ever since Miss Hayes, my third grade teacher, shamed me for handing a clean piece of paper to the only black student in class, the smell of injustice triggers me to action. The Gray Panthers agreed to organize a fundraiser and to study the pursuant intrusion of the Patriot Act. Susan, Rhoda, Mary Frances, Marge, Ila, Arla and Marshall worked our study of the Bill of Rights into a Reading which we presented at branch libraries. It was after Katrina at the meeting featuring a member of the ACLU that we understood how the original Bill of Rights failed to answer the basic needs of food, housing, education, medical care, etc.

Eleanor Roosevelt had proposed a New Bill of Rights to FDR before he died in 1945; her appointment by Pres Truman to represent the United States at the new United Nations, led to her role as chair of the Commission on Human Rights and her huge part in crafting the still relevant Declaration of Human Rights. Members of OWL and Amnesty Intl. joined us to write a program on the stunning document. Our presentation of the Reading at various senior centers and residences was met with enthusiasm. At the Redwoods in Marin, one woman declared the program "the best we've had."

Lynne Stewart has inspired our outreach and enriched our values. The potluck fund-raisers we organized were celebrations of her courage and compassion, as well as her good humor. We miss her and will join her partner, Ralph Poynter, and her friends to celebrate her life in early May.

Barbara Lee has been active for years in the Gray Panthers Lynne Stewart Defense Committee. Please see the picture on the following page.

The Extraordinary Lynne Stewart

(October 8, 1939 – March 7, 2017)

By Jeff Mackler, edited by B. Lee

Charged with "conspiracy to aid and abet terrorism," Lynne took the witness stand in early 2005 at the close of her nine-month frame-up trial presided over by Federal District Court Judge John Koeltl in New York City. Stewart was asked by her attorney, Michael Tiger, why she had issued a press release on behalf of her client, the "blind" Sheik and Egyptian cleric, Omar Abdel Rahman, when she knew that doing so was a violation of a Special Administrative Order (SAM) that prohibited Rahman from engaging in contact with anyone, anywhere, other than his attorneys. Rahman had been falsely convicted in 1995 of participating in a New York City terrorist conspiracy and was serving a life-sentence in Rochester, Minn.

The answer to that question, put to Stewart full square, stood at the core of her case. "Why not just appeal the SAM's restrictions to a higher court?" Tiger continued. The stakes were high. The prosecution was demanding a 30-year sentence.

Lynne's sensational trial had all the earmarks of a government, in the name of its "war on terrorism", preparing to shred whatever semblance of fair play remained in the criminal justice system. To put an attorney in jail for diligently representing her client was close to unprecedented—"a chill on the bar," significant parts of the legal profession proclaimed.

In the end, some 90 percent or more of Lynne's nine-month trial focused on hearsay evidence, while the prosecution presented just a single witness to state that he had issued the SAM to Lynne. Not a single witness testified that Lynne had any connection to any terrorist activities anywhere.

Thus, Lynne's answer to the question as to why she didn't appeal this SAM to a higher court was crucial to her life itself. She might have argued that the SAM itself was ambiguous, that in the normal course of events when an attorney violates a SAM they are reprimanded or punished by being denied contact with their client for three months, and/or required to sign a new SAM.

(Continued on next page.)

The Extraordinary Lynne Stewart, continued

I paraphrase Lynne's remarks as I remember them in that rapt courtroom. I was astonished when she stated, "I have a friend in prison, Mumia Abu-Jamal. He filed a lawsuit to prevent his prosecutors from opening his mail, including from his attorneys." Lynne continued, "Mumia Abu-Jamal won that suit but it took him some five years. My duty to my client required that under such circumstances, we not wait five years with regard to a harmless press release."

Here was Lynne, at her personal, uninhibited, spontaneous best and craziest. With her life on the line she decided to bring the case of a dear friend and a convicted world-renowned "cop-killer," Mumia Abu-Jamal, to the attention of the New York jury. No serious attorney would have recommended it. But Lynne, cut from another cloth, believed that Mumia's case needed to be once again brought to public attention.

The final question asked to Lynne by her attorney was the clincher. "Lynne," said Tigar, "if you had to do it all over again, would you have issued that press release?" I was within some 15 feet of Lynne and holding my breath for her answer. Lynne, once again, had a choice, the easy road of contrition, apology, and a plea for forgiveness, or the road to hell—in Lynne's mind to socialist heaven—paved only with Lynne's life-long humanistic and loving intentions and faith that she could penetrate the hearts and minds of the jury.

She responded, as her eyes welled up with tears, "I would hope," she began and then paused. "I would

hope that I had the courage to do it again." She paused again, unable to speak—momentarily overcome by her emotions. She continued, "I would do it again!"

Stewart, for whom the truth was required to preserve her very being, put it on the line that day, perhaps never stopping to think of the consequences.

Five years after her 2005 "terrorist conspiracy" conviction, when I headed Lynne's defense committee on the West Coast, Lynne was cruelly sentenced to 10 years in a Texas prison, after vindictive federal prosecutors appealed the Federal Court judge's sentence of some 30 months.

After three years, Lynne, cancer ridden, was finally granted "compassionate release" following her prison doctors' diagnosis that she had less than a year to live. Lynne beat the odds and spent almost three years in freedom, continuing her life-long commitment to defending all victims of capitalist injustice.

Quoting Dylan Thomas, she told *The Times* that she had no intention of "going gently into that good night."

"Do not go gently into that good night,
Old age should burn and rage at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

*Jeff Mackler is a staff writer for Socialist Action. Socialistaction.org He can be reached at socialistaction@lmi.net



Lynne Stewart, in a visit to the Gray Panther office on Feb 6, 2008 during a speaking tour. Barbara and others organized a mini brunch/fundraiser literally overnight, at the office before the Board of Director's meeting. The food was wonderful and we raised over \$400 for Lynne's defense organization. Ralph Poynter, Lynne's husband, regaled us with tales of his early life as a musician. A good time was had by all and it's a miracle we could drag ourselves away for the meeting. Thanks to the Fog City Journal for the photo.

Paul Robeson Program A Huge Success at Koret Auditorium

By Barbara Lee



Paul Robeson: A Portrait in Story & Song

The Remember Robeson Committee. Gray Panthers of SF, arranged for the CCSF Chorus to present their musical, a narrative biography of Paul Robeson, at the Koret Auditorium on a recent Saturday afternoon.

Alex Bagwell opened the show leading us in a beautifully rendered *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, a tribute to the life of Lynne Stewart who had lost her struggle with cancer the previous Tuesday. (See pages 2 and 3.)

The Chorus and principle singers brought Paul Robeson to life with a narrative taken from interviews with Robeson's friends which Bagwell had documented for his Masters degree. Work songs and spirituals made famous by Robeson were sung with heart and unity of spirit, remarkable in this day and age of plastic hi-tech. Every face of each chorister was alive with love of the subject and the integrity of the music.

We are in search of venues and groups interested in presenting this show. Paul Robeson made history in music and in civil rights and remains a fascinating subject with whom to spend an evening or afternoon. Please contact B.Lee at 415/668-9572 for information.

Maya Angelou Speaks to Us

By Betty Traynor

Author, Poet, Performer, and Activist Maya Angelou was honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama in 2011, and recently featured in a PBS American Masters documentary of her life, *Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise*. She lived in San Francisco in her teens and 20s, attended the California Labor School, worked on a S.F. streetcar, and performed at local clubs such as the Purple Onion. She inevitably moved on to become the renowned memoirist and poet we all know. Here is one of her many poems highlighted on the PBS special.

On Aging by Maya Angelou

When you see me sitting quietly,
Like a sack left on the shelf,
Don't think I need your chattering.
I'm listening to myself.
Hold! Stop! Don't pity me!
Hold! Stop your sympathy!
Understanding if you got it,
Otherwise I'll do without it!
When my bones are stiff and aching,
And my feet won't climb the stair,
I will only ask one favor:
Don't bring me no rocking chair.
When you see me walking, stumbling,
Don't study and get it wrong.
'Cause tired don't mean lazy
And every goodbye ain't gone.
I'm the same person I was back then,
A little less hair, a little less chin,
A lot less lungs and much less wind.
But ain't I lucky I can still breathe in.



It's SB 562, Single-Payer Healthcare

By Michael Lyon

Healthcare in the US is under acute attack. Washington's loose cannon is swinging wildly, but one way or another, it's firing at our healthcare. It is time for California to act.

SB 562 establishes a single-payer healthcare system in California, eliminating insurance companies, and providing equal, comprehensive, affordable, accessible healthcare for everyone.

Today's public or private doctors, hospitals, and other providers would continue to deliver healthcare, but instead of being paid by insurance companies that deny care, they would be paid by a single independent, publicly-accountable Healthy California Board that would pay for all medically appropriate care. Doctors paid by the Board could not collect outside money for covered services.

All California residents would receive care, and the same quality of care, regardless of age, health, income, job status, gender/gender-orientation, and importantly, documentation.

All medically appropriate care is covered, including dental, vision, hearing, reproductive health, durable medical equipment, tests, diagnostic procedures, preventative care, and mental health.

Patients would pay no deductibles, co-payments, or bills. Care provided by doctors and hospitals would be paid by the Healthy California Board. This Board would also negotiate prices to be paid to doctors, hospitals, drug companies, equipment makers, and other healthcare providers.

You would choose your doctors, and hospitals, unless you chose to join an integrated medical plan like Kaiser which uses their providers. Since patients pay no out-of-pocket costs, and receive the same standard of care, there is no pressure or incentive to choose low-cost providers.

Money to run the healthcare system would come by pooling existing federal, state, and local healthcare funds (70% of California healthcare is already paid by government sources) plus progressive taxation of businesses and taxpayers.

A fiscal study of various alternatives for healthcare benefits and payment sources will be finished in

May, but preliminary figures show people will pay much less in additional taxation than they are paying for medical costs now. Eliminating insurance companies alone will save 25-30% of healthcare costs. Huge savings could also come from negotiating drug prices

As currently written, SB 562 preserves Medi-Cal-financed long-term care, including In-Home Supportive Services, IHSS, for current recipients. Within two years, this care would be extended to all seniors and children and adults with disabilities who need long-term care regardless of income. Advocates for seniors, people with disabilities and domestic workers are now working to write in an expanded vision of long-term care, particularly care based in the home or community.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Well, maybe a little bit

By Denise D'Anne

According to the American Council for Energy Efficient Economy, commercial buildings account for nearly a fifth of American energy use (up to 43%). The bill is around \$27.3 billion a year. There are multiple effects of this energy use. One effect is the sucking up to 258 billion kilowatt hours. Or equal to 40 million cars spewing carbon emissions to our growing warming problems.

Other effects of too much light in our world is that as many as 1 billion disoriented birds die each year hitting buildings. Sea turtles hatchlings are also affected by artificial light. Hatching turtles become disoriented from finding their way to the surf line. Whole ecosystems are affected making harder for prey animals to escape their predators as well causing trees to bud early. The affect here is that trees become more susceptible to frost damage.

Solutions are being sought to this light problem. Federal and state government offer tax breaks to some building owners. One would expect that reducing one's energy bills would be enough incentive. Besides saving money we can all contribute to ameliorating global warming. In some states, as in California, we get a significant portion of our energy from dams. Reducing energy use also preserves our precious water supply.

(Source Mother Jones "Dim-Witted" Nov/Dec 2016)

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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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More Actions and Events

(Complete on-line Calendar at http://bit.ly/gpsf_cal)

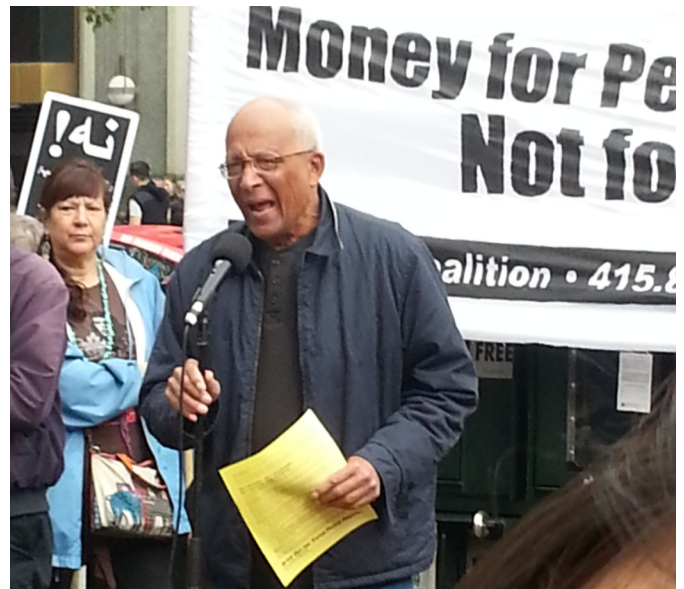
Sat, Apr 15, 3 PM, Single Payer Now Meeting of SB 562, the new California Single-Payer bill. 2940 16th St, at Capp, one block East of 16th St BART station.

Fri, Apr 21, 6:30 PM Sensible Cinema Earth Day Presentation *Before the Flood*, award-winning Climate Change film. Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin.

Sat, Apr 22, 10 AM, OWL-SF Meeting: Women's Health. 1125 Fillmore (Northern Police Station).

Wed, Apr 19, 1 PM, Senior & Disability Action's Housing Collaborative Meeting: 4th Floor, 1360 Mission, near 10th St. Demand housing for all.

Thurs, Apr 27, 7 PM, Steve Early, Melvil Willis, Refinery Town: How the Richmond Progressive Alliance Took Over, Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin.



Dr. George Wright spoke eloquently against the bombing of Syria at an emergency rally the next day. He also spoke at an earlier Gray Panther forum March 5 on foreign policy under Trump. Thanks to Kay Walker for the picture.