

GRAY PANTHERS of SACRAMENTO ON the PROWL



Volume 28 Number 10

October 2006

P. O. BOX 19348 SACRAMENTO, CA 95819

916-332-5980

www.gpcal.org

General Meeting

Tuesday, October 10 - 1:00

Hart Sr. Center - 27th & J

Meet Us At the OK Corral

Teachers and Nurses take opposing positions on Proposition 89

The Arena Issue: Why We Must Oppose it

Review of all Propositions and their supporters

Names of speakers to be e-mailed shortly!

Come and ask your questions about the array of issues facing us on the ballot.

Let's help each other make good choices at the November election.

Bring friends - enjoy refreshments and fellowship - Welcome ALL



IN OUR COMMUNITY

Save the Date: Oct 22: Daniel Ellsberg at CSUS

Nov 14: FREE Gray Panthers Senior Voice Development Conference

October 5: SACTO GENERAL PLAN WORKSHOP . North East Area. 1040 Q St., Rio Linda
RSVP or info. at 874-6412

Welcome to a Raft of New Members from Recent Months: Beverly Giles, Samuel Jones, Ed Matthews, Nancy Peverini, Alice Thomas, Olga Trevizo, Mary Pat Touns



RENT STABILIZATION PASSES

September 11th was an historic day for Mobile/Manufactured Home owners residing in Citrus Heights when the City Council passed Sacramento County's first Rent Stabilization Ordinance by a 2/3 vote!

A wise move by the northeast Sacramento County suburb and a boon to those who live in the many senior parks there.

Contributed by Lloyd Logan



YOUR NOVEMBER BALLOT

Our October meeting will offer an opportunity for us to express individual thoughts and propose positions. These are some of the facts:

Prop 1A: Prohibits the use of sales taxes on motor vehicles for anything other than transportation funding targeting traffic congestion.

Prop 1B: \$19.9 billion in transportation funding to relieve traffic congestion on roads and highways and improve bus, rail and transit systems.

Prop 1C: authorizes \$2.9 billion in housing bonds to provide shelters for battered women, low-income seniors, veterans and working families. Consistent with statewide growth management guidelines. Strongly supported by housing advocates.

Prop 1D: \$10.4 billion in bonds for K-12 school improvements and new construction to relieve over-crowding and expand the state universities and community colleges. Attempts to bring back open access to higher education by providing stable funding tied to enrollment. Defines Community Colleges as part of Public School System.

Prop 1E: Allocates \$4.4 billion for levee repairs and bring flood protection in Sacramento, Marysville, Yuba City to \$200-yr. flood level. Central Valley support!

The package of bonds was devised by the Governor and legislators. However, the LAO (Legislative Analyst) warns they make take money from the General Funds to pay interest on 30-year loans! They say that 1E may also impact property tax revenues.

Prop 83: Asks if sex offenders and violent predators must spend their entire lives with Global Positioning System monitoring and be banned from living within 2,000 feet of a school or park. **In addition to social justice concerns, the LAO suggests spiraling costs and lack of defined monitoring responsibilities.**

Prop 84: Pays for state park improvements, anti-pollution and safe drinking water programs and promote public access to natural resources with a \$5.4 billion bond program. Money formerly designated for this purpose almost gone. Has a very diverse list of supporters, including Sierra Club.

Prop 85: Would require doctors be required to notify a parent or guardian before they performed an abortion on a girl under 18. Forces a mandatory 48-hr. Waiting period. Minor would have to go to court to block requirement. Rejected in 2005 by an overwhelming majority. Permanent Constitutional amendment. Supported by Evangelicals and Right to Lifers. **Opposed by doctors, "Right to Chose" advocates, Planned Parenthood.**

Prop 86: Provides a 13 cent per pack tax on cigarettes (\$2.60 per carton) for hospital emergency services, nursing education, health insurance for children. **Support from Amer. Lung Assn, opposed by tobacco companies. Potential to cost more in Medi-Cal \$ to Healthy Families program from changes to Medi-Cal rules.**

Prop 87: \$4 billion program to reduce oil and gas consumption by 25% thru promoting energy efficient technologies/research and production incentives for alternative fuel vehicles, funded by 1.5-6% taxes per barrel of oil on producers of oil extracted in California. **Would cut into Prop 98 money. Strongly supported by the Oil Industry.**

Prop 88: seeks increase K-12 school funding by charging \$50 tax on real property parcels, exempting certain elderly and disabled homeowners, raising up to \$500 million annually for public school programs. **Projects over time may cost more than revenues, according to LAO.**

Prop 89: would impose new limits on campaign contributions, increase tax rate on corporations and financial institutions 0.2% to raise over \$200 million for public financing of political campaigns for state elected officials. Those who break rules could be thrown out of office or even jailed. Known as the Campaign to Stop Political Corruption or the Clean Money Campaign. Similar laws working in Arizona and 7 other states/ two municipalities. Appear to have forwarded minority and women candidates. **Gray Panthers support.**

Prop 90: Those opposed believe in protection from eminent domain abuses, too full of loopholes, tax-payers pay litigation costs and payments. Claims to protect communities and prevent over-development with new "consumer protections. Opponents say it could make agencies reluctant to regulate uses that affect environmental quality. Would prevent living wage ordinances! Supported by Americans for Limited Government. **Gray Panthers opposes.**



HOUSE SENDS RENEWED OLDER AMERICANS ACT TO SENATE

The house has reauthorized the Older Americans Act with a provision that would require the Community Service Employment Program to place 30% of seniors involved into unsubsidized jobs in the private sector by 2011. This is very problematic, with many community service oriented nonprofits providing those minimum wage jobs for those seniors. In so many cases the jobs, while low paid, mean the senior can survive on that and their social security checks. The proposal will weaken the Older Americans act. We need to let Senators Boxer and Feinstein know to take a VERY HARD look at Senate version, apparently now in the Health, Education, Labor & Pensions committee, and be sure the unsubsidized jobs are actually out there for seniors before voting for it.

CAPITOL RALLY ANTICIPATES SOCIAL SECURITY SNEAK ATTACK

Gray Panthers was strongly represented, along with 700 others in an "Americans United for Social Security" rally on the steps of the capitol. Demonstrators to our now-famous "Donut Hole" cards to legislators throughout the capitol! The Democratic Caucus, 100 strong, came out and before the crowd signed a pledge to protect social security from the Bush sneak attack. Bush snuck a pilot plan into the budget to privatize this hallowed social compact! Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid led the cry to stop him. We are planning a possible campaign to put Congress under social security - watch for events to come!! Are you already?

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The Senate environment committee has not allowed Richard Pombo to destroy the Endangered Species Act reform bill, which has passed the House. Lets hope the Senate allies ins this issue stand firm. A gentle nudge to Feinstein and Boxer wouldn't hurt.

NEW PROTECTION FOR SENIORS

Beginning next year, lenders of reverse mortgages will be prohibited from offering an annuity to, or referring a person to an annuity seller, nor will those salesmen be allowed to require the purchase of annuities as a stipulation for a reverse mortgage. Legislation, **AB 1609**, was signed by the Governor, a win for those trying to protect unsuspecting seniors, in particular.

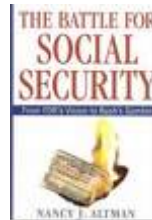


OUR ENVIRONMENT

A re-

Small Step Forward

Environmental Defense activists report to us that Inhofe, who is actually a Republican from Oklahoma, held hearings on technologies that might reduce global warming pollution. So the issue is now on the front burner! Senator Carper (D-DE) and Alexander (R-TN) have teamed up on a bill to cap pollution from power plants. McCain and Lieberman say they would offer their support of this energy legislation to be tacked onto the Climate Stewardship Act, which would mandate economy-wide reductions. Do I see a little more awareness abroad?



SOCIAL SECURITY STILL IN JEOPARDY

John Bernier

As expected, President Bush, foiled in his frontal attack on Social Security, now is making a backdoor assault on the program.

With presidential support, the GOP-controlled Budget Committee approved S. 3521, which is designed to revive Bush's push to privatize Social Security but in a less obvious manner. Under the smoke screen of "deficit reduction," the legislation lays the groundwork for privatization by creating a 15 member commission to recommend Social Security change, with the anticipated bias toward the private accounts.

The wording of S. 3521 (Gregg (NH) is reminiscent of how Part D was railroaded through Congress. The legislation would permit only 50 hours of debate on legislation drafted by the commission, and only 10 hours to consider any conference report. This is an out-and-out open door to Social Security privatization, which would inevitably result in dramatic cuts in Medicare/ Medicaid, undermining our ability to keep up with the expanding needs of an aging population.

Another frightening aspect of the bill is that the commission would be given authority to make recommendations to Congress to consolidate and terminate virtually every federal agency and program over the next four years. The recommendations then would be presented to Congress which would be limited to an "up-or-down" vote. With the nation's social programs now under a dark cloud due to the policies of the Bush Administration, it is frightening to think what conditions would be if S. 3521 is enacted into law.





FROM SACRAMENTO:

With the legislative session is over, a pile of bills is on the governor's desk...or killed by the legislature....we can take a look at our victories and losses against special interests and industry lobbyists.

AB 2911 (Nunez) will allow the state to negotiate discounts of up to 40-60% on prescription drug prices for million Californians who lack prescription drug coverage. A two-year campaign that health advocates won in spite of \$80 million spent by the pharmaceutical industry, is a win, but has a problem, because the penalty clause would chop companies off the MediCal list of drugs if they don't comply and there is the nagging concern this might be a problem for recipients.

AB 2877 (Frommer) was one for which Gray Panthers worked hard, creating a much needed State Website where consumers will be able to find lowest prices in their own area, a particular boon for the uninsured and the under-insured. Frommer is now termed out, but can count this as a victory under his belt.

By the time you receive the newsletter, you may have heard that Arnold came across on his promise to sign these two. We will believe it only when we see it! But then, it's an election year, and there has been a lot of jockeying for public approval!

Gray Panthers joined in celebrating the sending to the Governor of **SB 840** (Kuehl's Universal Healthcare bill, though Schwarzenegger had said he would veto it, citing his problem with "socialization". Health care costs are on the table at many negotiations and individuals sometimes go bankrupt trying to for medical needs, so it's a shame the governor couldn't lead the nation in guaranteeing health insurance for all of us. We believe eventually the nation will have a similar plan, and we'll hang in the fight for however long is needed. We need people like Senator Kuehl in our legislature to fight the good fight for "our side". Kuehl expressed it this way: "The Governor's erroneous statements on SB 840 were to be expected after his refusal to meet even once with me for an explanation of what the bill would actually do for California..(he) errs in using the insurance industry's 'government run healthcare' label for the bill. In truth, all providers of healthcare would have remained as they now are, public or private..(indications are) he has not read the bill, doesn't understand the bill, or is being completely misdirected by his handlers. Perhaps the most significant error the Governor makes is in his failure to recognize that SB 840 is exactly what he purports

to be seeking...In his own words, spoken only a few weeks ago "I don't believe in universal health-care." Will Gray Panthers remember that!! Send the Senator a special thank you for her efforts: Senator Sheila Kuehl, State Capitol Room 5108, Sacramento, CA 95814

SB 163 (Scott) was defeated by the legislature. It pushed for disclosure of prescription drug trial results, and increased transparency in safety issues. **AB 71** (Chan) which would have provided a toll-free number where you could get adverse drug reaction reports was also killed! We only hope drug companies will soon be forced to be more forthcoming and the public safer!

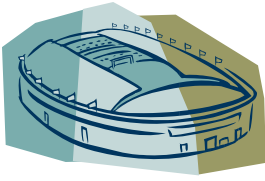
AB 1169 (Torrico) would restore a 60-day notice for tenants who are evicted for no fault of theirs. When landlords decide to evict a tenant, often to convert to a condo-complex, current state law only requires 30-day. This is a difficult situation for elderly or disabled who must find a new place to live - and get moved! - in only 30 days. For those on a fixed income, new rental deposits can be problematic. We have worked hard for the governor's signature on this and on...

AB 1363, Jones Conservatorship bill, described about in the September newsletter. As we go to press they are still on the governor's desk.

We advocated for and against 85 measures this legislative session and still await a final tally of what passes into law. Work begins now on ideas and plans for January 07 new session. Are you with us to advocate thru letters, calls, rallies and visits??

VICTORY IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ARENA

We did it again! On the heels of the governor signing the Million Solar Roofs bill, he followed up with the historic global warming bill, **AB 32**. It may be that this environmental support is political posturing, but in any case it will make California a world leader in solving global warming. The plan will cut greenhouse gases emitted s from electric power plants, refineries and other sources by 25% by the year 2020. You can learn more about this action and other issues at www.environmentcalifornia.org.



WHERE IS OUR DREAM GOING?

For years, advocates for social services, affordable housing, transportation and in-home-services have had to beg and cajole the city council and county Board of Supervisors for funding. Now we are being asked to set most of those needs aside while a enormous arena is built that will add to the wealth of the Maloof family, provide entertainment ad perks for the rich and visiting lobbyists.

Many Gray Panthers are big sports fans, but we just wonder why not spend money to upgrade or build the proposed arena at the Arco site? Even the Maloofs seem to be wondering that as well. What has happened to that dream of that area to be rebuilt with parks, affordable housing, grocery and other services in connection with the multi-modal transportation center? We could be another beautiful waterfront like Portland if we had the will. No, the Maloofs want a sea of cars, traffic jams and pollution in the downtown for every event.

Wow, poor residents of senior housing currently on I St at 5th & 6th!

For the taxpayers, many precious dollars diverted to the arena should first be spent on community services. We need much more for homeless persons, better community transportation, streets and sidewalks, better schools and mentor programs, community health clinics, and definitely police protection against gangs and home invasions.

All deals so far seem to assure that we will have to wait until the arena is built for more funding through that proposed sales tax. And this tax is separated from the spending for the arena in the form of Measures Q and R in order to circumvent the 2/3 vote that would be required if the tax and arena were in one measure on the ballot.

With the ball bouncing almost daily as this newsletter goes to press, just keep in mind that there has never been an economic benefit to the community from an arena project. Respected economist Allen Sanderson (University of Chicago) once said, "If you want to inject money into the local economy, it would be better to drop it from a helicopter than invest in a new ball-park." We never had the right to public input, public surveys...nothing. Now think about those things as you check the ballot on Measures Q, to split money between the arena and other government projects, & R, to raise \$1.2 billion in tax revenues through a 1/4 cent sales tax..



IN MEMORIAM: DR. FRED PRATT

A Tribute by John Bernier

The death of Dr. Fred Pratt was a great loss to Gray Panthers, but also a great loss to the thousands of people, mostly children, all over the world who will be deprived of his healing hand. He died at home on August 25th.

Fred is truly one person who earned the title of humanitarian. Whenever he was absent from a Gray Panthers meeting, he most likely could be found in such places as Guatemala, Philippines, Uganda, or a couple dozen other countries around the world doing volunteer work as a plastic surgeon. His area of special interest and expertise was congenital cleft lip, palate, and nasal deformities, which he used to make the lives of countless children, the world over, worth living. At his side was his wife, Patricia, whose skill and experience as a surgical nurse was put to good use assisting Fred in these activities.

He also was a dedicated peace activist. Fred was a member of numerous peace organizations including Peace Action of Sacramento, Amnesty International, and Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985.

A World War II veteran, Fred attended the University of Vermont on the GI Bill where he earned BS and MD degrees. After four years of general medical practice in Folsom, he completed his residency in plastic and reconstructive surgery at the Upstate New York Medical Center. He then returned to the Sacramento area in 1962 and opened a private medical practice specializing in plastic surgery. In addition, he served as an assistant clinical professor at the UC Davis Department of Plastic Surgery, and also founded the Sutter Cleft Palate and Orofacial Anomaly Panel in Sacramento. In addition, he founded a plastic surgical clinic through the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society SPIRIT program to help Sacramento's uninsured residents.

Contributions in Fred's memory may be made to the Agape Foundation at 1095 Market Street, Suite 304, San Francisco, CA 94103 www.agapefdn.org. A memorial service was held at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento on October 1. However, the greatest memorials to him are the countless children the world over, who through the dedication of Dr. Frederick, raised their lives from misery to happiness.

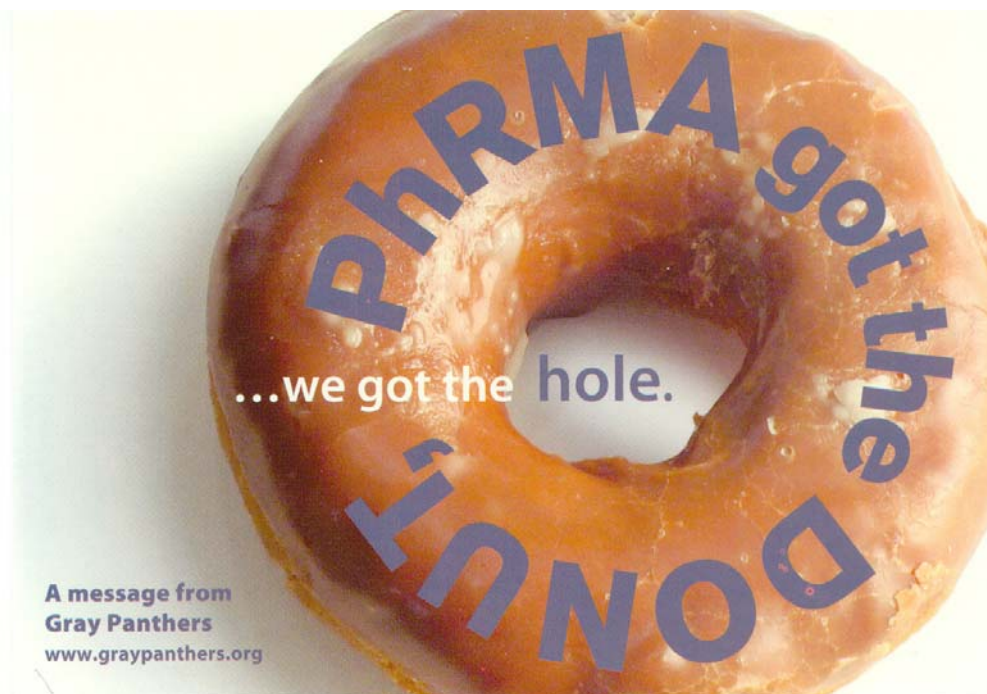


<http://home.ourfuture.org/straighttalklive/20060921.html> Congressman Marion Berry, Arkansas, Pharmacist, talks about the doughnut hole.

No Donut Hole!

On Friday, September 22nd, President Bush's Part D prescription drug disaster will surprise tens of thousands of seniors when it stops paying for their medications. That's the day when the average Medicare enrollee falls into Part D's dangerous "donut hole". The donut hole exists because conservatives designed Part D more for insurance and pharmaceutical companies than for enrollees.

- Nearly 7 million seniors will fall into the Part D donut hole this year, where each will be forced to pay nearly \$3,000 out-of-pocket for the medications s/he needs.
- The average senior would fall into the doughnut hole on Sept. 22nd.
- Many seniors simply can't afford their medications after they fall into the donut hole. The donut hole literally puts their lives at risk.
- Conservatives' focus on privatizing healthcare created a program that was costly and confusing, when a simple government solution existed.
- By privatizing healthcare, conservatives sold out America's seniors.
- Conservative corruption exacerbated the Part D disaster.
- They inserted a provision that actually forbade Medicare from negotiating for lower drug prices.
- It makes no sense to create a law that mandates Americans overpay for anything. Yet that's precisely what conservatives did with prescription drugs under Part D.
- Conservative ideology failed here. Conservatives' focus on privatizing healthcare created a program that was costly and confusing, when a simple government solution existed—namely a comprehensive prescription benefit delivered by Medicare.
- By privatizing healthcare, conservatives sold out America's seniors. They handed over billions to corporations and stuck seniors with confusing plan choices, coverage gaps, and billions in out-of-pocket expenses.
- Conservative corruption exacerbated the Part D disaster. Part D was written by two Republicans who were literally negotiating their next jobs with the pharmaceutical industry as they worked to create Part D.
- With the savings from negotiated prices, we could eliminate the donut hole entirely without any extra costs to seniors or taxpayers.



2006/2007 Officers and Steering Committee of Sacramento Gray Panthers

Chairperson: Joan Lee 916-332-5980
Secretary/Program: Marge Cumming
Treasurer: Lola Young
Staff Project Coordinator, Medicare Part D grant, Margie Metzler
Environmental: Dr. Karl Stoffers
Disabled Issues: Terry Terry
Historian: OPEN POSITION
Hospitality: Joyce Westergaard
Housing Issues: Linda Roberts and Karen Raasch (CIDs)
Labor/Wage Issues: Nell Ranta
Newsletter Asst. Editors: John Bernier and Betty Cooper Youngren
SS/Medicare Advisor: Peter D'Anna
Transportation: Jim and Doris Sanford
Members at Large: Edie Poole, Pat Naylor, Jean Mellberg, Betty Merle
Computer Assistant: Beverly Crosby
Webmaster Staff: Margie Metzler

All members are welcome to steering committee meetings held monthly the 4th Tuesday at 1 PM in the Cypress Room at Hart Center.



Maggie Kuhn

JOIN SACRAMENTO GRAY PANTHERS!

Gray Panthers Annual Dues are \$30 for individuals and \$35 for families.

New members who join through the end of 2006 pay the full amount. Beginning January 2007, they will pay the amount from the following monthly pro-rated schedule for 2006-2007. **Be aware that you will be billed again in September.** This *includes* newsletters, membership in Gray Panthers National, and Gray Panthers California.

Month	Individual	Family
January	\$20.00	\$20.50
February	17.50	18.00
March	15.00	15.50
April	12.50	13.00
May	10.00	10.50
June	7.50	8.50
July	5.00	5.50
August	Both \$3.00 + \$30.00 for 2007	

TODAY I /WE WANT TO JOIN GRAY PANTHERS SACRAMENTO

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

MEMBERSHIP:

Regular: \$30 or pro-rated amt. _____

Family: \$35 or pro-rated amt. _____

newsletter subscription **only** \$15 _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Note: It is not necessary to pay for the newsletter if you join as a full member!

Make check to Gray Panthers of Sacramento. Send to PO Box 19438, Sacramento, CA 95819.

REMEMBER: Lack of funds will not deter belonging to our organization! Call Joan Lee for further information: 916-332-5980



THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE representing 4.6 million seniors sent this news release Sept. 13.

National Seniors Advocacy Organization Predicts Means Testing will drive healthier, wealthier seniors away from Medicare. Medicare's 5.6% Medicare premium hike announcement marks the beginning of a new era for Medicare. For the first time in the program's 41 year history, seniors will no longer pay the same amount for the same health care services. Part B premiums will be subject to *means testing*, forcing more than one million beneficiaries to pay significantly higher premiums starting in January. Within three years, these higher income seniors' premiums are projected to be double or triple the amount of a standard premium and even more seniors will be affected.

Congress' stated goal for means testing of the Part B premium is to save money; however, the Congressional Budget office reports that means testing saves barely *three-tenths of one percent* of Medicare's budget over the next 10 years.

Means testing will drive wealthier and healthier seniors out of traditional Medicare and into private plans, in fact, CMS predicts 50,000 seniors will leave in the first year alone. This exodus will increase overall costs, threaten public support for Medicare and not coincidentally, boost profits for private insurers. The privatization of Medicare began three years ago when the MMA was passed but most seniors don't even realize it's happening.

The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare and its 4.6 million members and supporters will continue to lobby Congress to: eliminate Medicare means-testing, use the \$10 billion dollar industry subsidies to help close the doughnut hole, and allow Medicare to negotiate the lowest prescription drug prices for Part D beneficiaries.

An analysis of Medicare means testing can be found on their website at www.ncpssm.org

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