



Volume 29 Number 4

April 2007

P. O. BOX 19438 SACRAMENTO, CA 95819

916-332-5980

[www.gpcal.org](http://www.gpcal.org)

**GENERAL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2007 1:00-3:00 PM**  
**Hart Senior Center, 27th & J Sts.**



**THE DEPRESSING NEWS:**  
**Who Cares About Senior Mental Health?**

Speakers: Lin Benjamin, Geriatric Mental Health Specialist  
Geri Esposito, Gray Panther and Executive Director CA Association Licensed  
Clinical Social Workers

**REFRESHMENTS SERVED VISITORS WELCOME!**

**PROGRAM COORDINATORS: Jean Mellberg and Judy Bietz**

**For Information, CALL 332-5980**



**IN OUR COMMUNITY**

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**April 14, Gray Panthers of California Quarterly Meeting**, San Francisco, hosted by SF Gray Panthers, 10AM to 3PM. Location not yet been announced; check our website, [www.gpcal.org](http://www.gpcal.org), or call 332-5980.

**April 17**, Vintage Woods Sr. Apts. tour and forum on Affordable Housing sponsored by SHRA and Sacramento Housing Alliance

**April 22, 11-5:00: Earth Day 2007.** Main Quad, CSUS, Featuring Mitch Martin and the Blues Rockers, many booths and activities.

**April 22, 9:00 am.** Earth Day Earthwalk. Discovery Park. Raise dollars fog the environment. Advance registration required. Contact Tonya Lindsay, 364-3410 for info.



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**May 2**, Lions Gate Hotel, Sacramento, Caregiver Conference: "Understanding Memory Loss – A Celebration of Creative Approaches". All day, \$60 after March 30, limited scholarships. Sponsor: Alzheimer's Assn. Contact 1-800-272-3900 or Denise Davis 930-9080.

**Scheduling Community Activities?**

Please submit your information to [joanblee@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joanblee@sbcglobal.net) for publication by the 15th of the preceding month OR EARLIER! **Please note: Joan's e-mail address has changed to joanblee@sbcglobal.net.**

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**Affordable housing list**

An excellent list of affordable housing units in Sacramento is available at [www.SHRA.org/WebReports/Affhousing/html](http://www.SHRA.org/WebReports/Affhousing/html). Joan Lee has the list printed out as well.





# GRAY PANTHERS NEWS

## Welcome to New Gray Panthers

Mary Brill and Richard Seyman

And a special welcome to

Gray Panthers Santa Barbara as our newest network active in Gray Panthers California

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### A Special Notice to All Sacramento Members

We will be holding an election for officers in our local network in June, with the ballot in the May issue. At this time, we are considering any and all nominations for the office of Co-Convenor, as well as for Convenor (Chairperson), Secretary, and Treasurer. The duties of the Co-Convenor are to attend all Steering Committee meetings, lead general meetings in the absence of the Convenor (currently Joan Lee), to assist in covering events that would be of benefit to our advocacy and members, and generally see that programs take place as planned by the Steering Committee.

Current leaders re-running for office include Joan Lee, Convenor and Lola Young, Treasurer. Pat Naylor has filled temporarily the office of Secretary and will need to be "ratified."

We hope you will all return your ballots when they appear in the newsletter and, again, consider seriously a nomination for the office of Co-Convenor.

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### In Our Neighborhood



#### It's a Miserable Mess Out Here!

While Sacramentans struggle with ever more expensive homes in the outlying areas and lofts in downtown, it is obvious to those of us who get the calls for help, that seniors in California are often struggling to make ends meet. 8% of our elders now are under the federal poverty line (\$9,367), with an additional 29% living between 100 and 199% of poverty. Many of these are not eligible for many of our public assistance programs, but do not have money for basic needs. Nationally 3.6 million Americans in 2005 were at poverty level, and 10% of them were over 65.

Remember that senior women are almost twice as likely to live in poverty as senior men. As we develop transit options, we must keep these figures in mind. Eight percent may seem like just a few, but these elders often live alone, isolated from family. As Jerry Garcia put it, "It's a miserable mess out there. Somebody's got to do something about it. It's just a damn shame it's got to be us!" Right, Jerry — and we will step up to the challenge.



## FROM THE STATE CAPITOL

### GOVERNOR GOT 5,000 EMAILS TO CLEAN UP DRINKING WATER

Almost 5,000 people emailed the governor asking him to clean up our drinking water but the California Water Board still has to take action.

The can issue an order against one of the most egregious of situation caused by Goodrich and Black & Decker, forcing them to restore clean water to the small city of Rialto. Tucked beneath the mountains about an hour east of LA, Rialto once boasted the cleanest aquifer in the region.

Years of careless storage and disposal at a weapons manufacturing plant north of the city, however, leaked enormous amounts of rocket fuel into the city's drinking water supply. It's been 10 years since contamination was discovered and the polluters have failed to clean up their mess.

This isn't just about Rialto - it's about our state's water supply - your water!!!

There is alarming evidence that water contaminated by rocket fuel is at a level up to three times safe levels. This could be just as well in Sacramento, right? Goodrich Corp. and Black & Decker have failed this needed clean-up created more than 40 years ago, so citizens are still drinking water contaminated by fuel!

To take action, click on <https://www.environmentcalifornia.org/action/clean-water/water-board?id4=ES>. Tell the Board to issue the Environment California proposed order to:

- Stop the spread of perchlorate contamination throughout the Rialto area
- Pay for full cleanup of all contamination within the aquifer
- Foot the bill for providing a safe supply of drinking water until cleanup is complete
- Protect citizens across the state from similar situations

A proposed order marks the culmination of more than a year of advocacy by Environment California, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, who released several research reports and garnered significant media visibility for the need for a strong cleanup order.

*You can make a difference!!*

## LAW HELPS ABATE SENIOR ABUSE

California's senior citizens now have greater protection against financial abuse through a new law that went into affect the first of the year. The law requires employees of financial institutions to report to the proper authorities any such abuse.

"Early reporting of suspected abuse is critical for the recovery of stolen finances, and employees of financial institutions are in a unique position to witness and report abuse before it's too late," declared Assemblywoman Lois Wolk of Davis, co-sponsor of the legislation that led to the law. "This law is a strong step towards better protection of our seniors and dependent adults, some of society's most vulnerable members."

Officers and employees of banks and federal and state credit unions are now required to report any suspected abuse to law enforcement agencies or to county adult protect service programs. Senator Joe Simitian, who cosponsored the measure in the Senate, said he expects this statute to put an end to the "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil," attitude that has left seniors unprotected for far too long.

By John Bernier

## HEALTH PLANS PROPOSED FOR CALIFORNIANS

One of the most hotly contested issues in this legislative session will be providing health care for all Californians. At least four health care reform proposals will be considered, including one sponsored by Senate President Pro Tem Perata, and another by Assembly Speaker Nunez. Senator Sheila Kuehl has re-introduced her Single-Payer bill, SB 840, and then there is what still remains just a proposal from the Governor. The story is that there will be an effort to cobble together something from the Nunez/Perata/Governor ideas, all of which allow the Health Care Insurance Industry to retain control of the system.

SB840 has a number of advantages over the Governor's plan. What about the \$12 Billion it would save annually? This would be accomplished by eliminating the "middle-man" insurance industry from the health care program. Balance that against Schwarzenegger's plan, which would cost the state an additional 12 billion dollars, using state funds to subsidize the insurance industry. However, the principal advantage of SB840 is that it would cover all Californians under a single health plan administered efficiently by the state as the single payer. The program would replace all current State insurance programs for residents of the state. And, a concept that sticks in corporate craws, it would also replace all private health insurance plans, except for insurance purchased to cover services not covered by the legislation.

The governor's proposal would perpetuate a health care bureaucracy of over 6,000 health insurance plans, and 69 government programs. SB840's single payer plan reduces this bureaucracy from 6,000 to 1. As for the extent of coverage, SB840 would include a broader range of services than are now covered under many existing health plans, or that which the governor proposes for his plan. Senator Kuehl's legislation would cover hospital inpatient and outpatient care, emergency room visits, physician services (including preventive care), prescription drugs, lab tests, mental health and substance abuse treatment, as well as eyeglasses and other services. SB 840 would also provide for home health and adult daycare services for the aged/or disabled. And dental needs would be covered along with vision and hearing care.

As for selecting health care providers, in the governor's proposed formula for health care, insurance companies would be allowed to limit such choices, but SB 840 would permit a full choice of such providers. Regarding deductibles and co-pays, under the governor's plan, the minimum required coverage would have a \$7,500 out of pocket cost for individuals, and \$10,000 for families. In contrast, SB 840 calls for no out of pocket costs or deductibles.

Gray Panthers has a long history, as members early on of the national Universal Health Care Now coalition, and must stand on the sidelines watching as the crafting of Perata/Nunez et al is negotiated. We can only protest ad infinitum the control of corporate insurance over our lives. We know one day we will win this battle, not just in California but for the US.

Stand ready, please, to come to the Capitol to support the Kuehl bill, or whatever Hearings and discussions are held in the months ahead. You will be contacted via e-mail alerts, but even now you can send another letter of support from yourself as an individual to Senator Kuehl at the State Capitol, Sacramento, 95814.

—John Bernier



## GREAT EDUCATIONAL WEBSITES!

**California Nurses Association:** New single payer website at <http://www.SinglePayer.com>

**Latest news on various topics:** California Progress Report: <http://www.californiaprogressreport.com>



## ENVIRONMENTAL WATCH

### WHERE IS THE BIG NUCLEAR THREAT?

We are increasingly faced with media coverage of the government's fear campaign over Iran and their "nuclear threat". Which gives us pause to wonder who is the threat? We continue to be the #1 nuclear power in the world. Further, as the world looks back on 60 years of the atomic age, the U. S. Department Of Energy, for the first time since the Cold War, is preparing to begin production of Plutonium-238, which has been described as "one of the most toxic substances known to man." The New York Times reported that this element is so radioactive that "a speck can cause cancer."

Plutonium-238, which is used as a power source for space vehicles, is not the only energy that can be used for that purpose. The European Space Agency utilizes solar power for its space exploration. And even NASA's Deep Space Probe looks to the sun for its power source.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to realize the massive disaster which would result if a space vehicle powered by Plutonium-238 crashed on takeoff.

And then there is subject we don't even want to think about. What if terrorists obtained this substance and created a "dirty bomb?"

This brings up the question, why is the U.S. so anxious to once again begin producing Plutonium-238 after all these years? Government sources say only it would be used for "secret missions." And these same sources also "promised" that this material would not be used for military purposes.

By the way, if you really want to take action about this, the DOE is inviting comments on its plan to resume production of Plutonium-238, which can be directed to:

Timothy A. Frazier, documents manager  
NE-50/Germantown Building  
Office of Space and Defense Power Systems  
Office of Nuclear Energy, Science & Technology  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585-1290  
e-mail: [ConsolidationEIS@nuclear.energy.gov](mailto:ConsolidationEIS@nuclear.energy.gov)  
Telephone: 301-903-9420

—John Bernier

## FROM WASHINGTON

### SENATOR BOXER WEIGHS IN ON IRAQ



Barbara Boxer let us know that she and Senator Russ Feingold recently introduced S448, known as the Iraq Redeployment Act of 2007. The bill would require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State to submit a report to Congress detailing their strategy for safely redeploying US forces from Iraq within six months of enactment of the act. It would also prohibit further funding for the deployment of US forces to Iraq, still allowing funding for counter terrorism operations, training of Iraqi security forces, and other security measures for USA infrastructure and civilian personnel.

The Senator believes that putting additional troops into the middle of an acknowledged civil war will only result in more civilian and American deaths and will not make up for the need of a political/diplomatic solution to solve the situation. She and others will continue the fight in spite of threats by the President to veto any and all measures of this persuasion that come his way.

We must support the Senator and others in Congress who search tirelessly for an end to this conflict. There are no simplistic answers. If you use a Gray Panthers postcard to make a statement, be sure to let them know we appreciate that they too care deeply about this critical issue.

The Senator has several offices:

- 501 I Street #7-600, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Hart Senate Office Bldg. #112, Washington, DC 20510

**From Joan B. Lee:** We appreciate letters written to the editor by Gray Panthers. Recently Leon Lefson, Gray Panther Emeritus, wrote "Don't Attack Iran". a short and sweet letter questioning whether threats concerning Iran were about democracy, freedom or what? He would suppose it is about "oil, oil, oil". Leon pointed out that "the crime of the millennium would be for the US to attack, destroy and murder thousands of innocent Iranians for the benefit of the major international oil giants." Have we heard that before? Seems to me I remember it in connection with some other conflict!?



## Public Transit in Sacramento

Please share this e-mail with your family and friends.

In Sacramento, light rail ridership grew 10% from 2005 to 2006, dramatically reducing the number of cars that would be on our local roads and highways. Even though public transit plays a key role in reducing traffic congestion and pollution, many politicians are paying too little attention to Governor Schwarzenegger's proposal to cut \$1.1 billion from public transit.

Please take a moment to ask Mayor Fargo to use her clout to fight for Sacramento's public transit funding. Then ask your friends and family to do the same by forwarding this email to them.

To take action, click on the link below or copy and paste it into your web browser:

<http://calpirg.org/CA.asp?id=1824&id4=ES>

### Background:

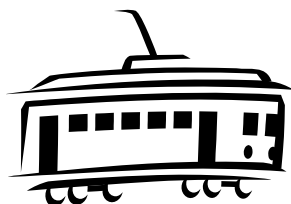
Last week the California Transportation Commission voted on \$4.5 billion in new spending on new roads and highways, using funds from the bonds approved by voters in Prop 1B. You may have read the recent news stories about how local politicians fought vigorously for more funding for roads and highways in their region.

Unfortunately, so much recent political attention has focused on which roads and highways will be expanded that public transit is at risk of being dramatically cut. The governor's proposed budget includes a paltry \$185 million in funds to the state Public Transportation Account (a 70% cut in funding from last year!) and uses \$600 million in bonds from Prop 1B to replace, rather than supplement, budget funds to build new rail and bus lines and buy new vehicles. Voters approved Prop 1B last year because we wanted new investments in transportation, including public transit. Instead, the governor is using Prop 1B to replace other funds, and as a result the local transit agencies won't have the funds to pay for additional operators even if they invest in the construction of new bus, train or light rail lines.

We need to invest in quality, convenient public transit in Sacramento and throughout the state to encourage more drivers to stay off the roads, reduce our oil dependence and cut pollution. CALPIRG is working to ensure that the legislature rejects the proposed cuts to public transit funding. We're directly lobbying legislators in Sacramento, forming a coalition with local transit riders and workers, environmental groups, senior organizations and others, talking to reporters and editors and, of course, relying on you to take action as well. Mayors are a particularly powerful voice in the halls of the capitol building, which is why I'm asking you to write to Mayor Fargo today.

Again, to take action, click on the link below or copy and paste it into your web browser:

<http://calpirg.org/CA.asp?id=1824&id4=ES>



## Quarterly Meeting of Gray Panthers California, San Francisco, Saturday April 14th.

The quarterly meeting of the California Gray Panthers will be in San Francisco, hosted by the SF Gray Panthers, on Saturday April 14th from 10AM to 3PM. The location has not yet been announced but it will be in downtown San Francisco near public transportation. We hope to combine the meeting with a little action at lunchtime around the issue of single payer healthcare. Please send agenda items to [graypanther-sf@sbcglobal.net](mailto:graypanther-sf@sbcglobal.net). We will notify you of future details via phone, e-mail or on our website ([www.gpcal.org](http://www.gpcal.org)). You can call Joan B. Lee at 916-921-5008 or [joan-blee@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joan-blee@sbcglobal.net) if you're interested in carpooling.

—Cathy Powell, Secretary GP of SF

## Blockbuster Drugs Now Generic!!

If you are currently taking any of these brand-name meds, speak to your doctor about going to the generic version. If there is none, perhaps you can switch to another drug's generic version. The ones listed below have now "gone off patent" and become sold as generics and will become cheaper and cheaper as more companies are allowed to produce them.

### Antidepressants:

Sertraline (generic of Zoloft)

Venlafaxine (generic of Effexor)

### Antihistamine:

Fexofenadine (generic of Allegra)

### Arthritis and Pain Relief:

Meloxicam (generic of Mobic)

### Cholesterol-lowering

Pravastatin (generic of Pravachol)

Simvastatin (generic of Zocor)





Dear California Gray Panther Activist,

Please mail the enclosed *Cost of War* post card to your member of Congress!

On the card, you are urged to express your views on the War on Iraq. We believe that this war is costing too much in lives and treasure. Do not let this administration escalate the war. Bring the troops home NOW!

Right now, this administration is attempting to justify an attack on Iran. It is **CRITICAL** that you contact your legislators and demand they put a **STOP** to this second attempt to justify a pre-emptive attack **RIGHT NOW!**

Addresses for your member(s) of Congress are:

Senator Dianne Feinstein, Hart Bldg. #331, Washington, DC 20510

Senator Barbara Boxer, Hart Bldg. #112, Washington, DC 20510

(A generic address for local U.S. Representatives would be Washington DC 20515; however their local address is in your phone book). You can use a postcard stamp, but don't delay – if you need to put on a regular stamp!!! Let's get this movin'!!!!

Let us know if or what response you get from this mailing this Post Card by calling or e-mailing Joan B. Lee at [joanblee@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joanblee@sbcglobal.net) or 916-332-5980.

This action campaign is sponsored by National Gray Panthers. For more information or to get involved with Gray Panthers, visit our California website ([www.gpcal.org](http://www.gpcal.org)) or the National website ([www.graypanthers.org](http://www.graypanthers.org)) or call 1-800-280-5362, ext. 28. Contact your local Gray Panthers Network at 916-332-5980.

*GRAY PANTHERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!*



## Sacramento Gray Panthers 2006/2007 Officers and Steering Committee

**Chairperson:** Joan Lee 916-332-5980  
**Secretary (Interim):** Pat Naylor  
**Treasurer:** Lola Young  
**Program Coordinator, Medicare Part D grant,** Margie Metzler  
**Environmental:** Dr. Karl Stoffers  
**Disabled Issues:** Terry Terry  
**Historian:** Marge Cumming  
**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:** Doris Sanford.  
 Interim: Dale Kooyman  
**Members at Large:** Edie Poole, Pat Naylor, Jean Mellberg, Betty Merle, Judy Bietz  
**Computer Assistant:** Margie Metzler  
**Webmaster:** Margie Metzler

Visit our website, [www.gpcal.org](http://www.gpcal.org), for Sacramento and California Gray Panthers issues, as well as Medicare Part D Updates!

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



White House Protest

Julie Jensen Photography

## 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 does not deter you from belonging to Gray Panthers!!** Call Joan Lee for further information: 916-332-5980

## LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS OFFER A CHANCE TO LEARN

With many hearings taking place this year, perhaps all those new legislators as well as the staff persons will be learning about the issues they are asked to legislate about! But it is also a chance for many of you to become more informed as well. They offer experts in a subject and those proposing bills, as well as written information – all for just showing up. So here are a couple you might like to attend (and light rail is just a block away from the Capitol at Cathedral Square!)

- **April 10: Assembly Judiciary (Dave Jones, Chair), Rm. 4202, Hearing on AB 70, Jones flood liability bill**, on various other issues such as immigration policy.
- **April 18, 1:30, Rm. 112, State Capitol:** Hearing on Senior Annuity Sales, Senate Committee on Banking & Insurance
- **April 19: Budget Sub #3, Health, Human Svcs..10 am, Room 4203:** Hearing on Dept of Social Programs: IHSS, Adult Protective Services, SSI/SSP and Community Care Licensing.
- **The Senate Health Committee** is always interesting and meets **Wednesdays at 1:30 in 4203**, and the **Assembly Aging & Long Term Care** meets at **2:00 each Tuesday in 4202**. Check them out!!

As we work to get letters of support written for Gray Panthers, perhaps you would be interested in what issues we are working on and looking for. First of course is our Rx Labeling Standards bill, but here, in no particular order, are some of the issues we are concerned with:

Single Payer Health Care, rental housing abuse, Fair pay for services rendered by IHSS workers, coverage of co-pays under Medicare Part D, an effort to move folks, who chose it, back into their communities from nursing homes, quality care in nursing homes which promised to do so with better reimbursement under AB 1629, shuttle transportation for local communities, fair play for residents in mobile home parks on many issues (about a dozen bills this session), real equity and fairness against discrimination of senior job seekers, immigrant workers and children, and GLBTs. Just for starters!

**GRAY PANTHERS  
Of SACRAMENTO  
P.O. Box 19438  
Sacramento, CA 95819**

<p><b>Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Sacramento, CA Permit #1040</b></p>
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