



# Gray Panthers Sacramento

P.O. BOX 19348 SACRAMENTO CA 95819

(916) 332-5980

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

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## February Meeting

Date, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Hart Senior Center, 27<sup>th</sup> and J Streets

### PANEL DISCUSSION:

## WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY LOOK LIKE?

Panel members will be from the Mayor's office, The Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) and the Sacramento Area Council of Governors (SACOG)

In the discussion period, you will have a unique opportunity to query panel members about your concerns. Made more important to many by the recent discussions around the rail yard expansion.

Bring your friends to this important discussion.

For further information: Call Joan Lee - 916-332-5080



## IN OUR COMMUNITY

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Wed. Feb 7, 10:00 am to noon, "Seniors And Washington" Political Analyst Gary Dietrich (KFBK Radio), Eskaton Village, 3939 Walnut Ave, . Carmichael.

If your organization is having a meeting or rally you wished included in our newsletter, please be sure to advise us by the 12th of the previous month.

Gray Panthers Sacramento thanks Pat Naylor for agreeing to be Secretary. We welcome her able assistance!"



We love you, Pat!



## GRAY PANTHERS NEWS

### EDITORIAL: MAGGIE KUHN (1905-1995) A Woman for All Reasons

Any who knew Maggie Kuhn, founder of Gray Panthers, remember her insatiable energy, her lusty spirit and her highly visible determination. At age 65, Maggie had come from a forced retirement with a deep seated outrage over ageism, sexism, and all the other isms by which women in particular were oppressed.

Weaned on the McCarthy era when people were branded by association, and matured by the philosophy of the likes of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, she soon had put together a group of five like-minded women to fight discrimination. But this was 1970 and the Viet Nam war changed that exclusivity – soon she was joined by college students in loud protest of that war, giving birth to the growing organization dubbed by the media as the Gray Panthers. From those days until her death at age 90, Maggie was known as a rabble-rouser who did so with a charming mixture of humor, shock, and common sense. She was very human, speaking fondly of her love affairs and pushed the envelope on concepts of what aging is all about. With her outspoken charm, she soon had shaped a movement that worked both at national and grassroots levels to champion universal health care, nursing home reform, shared housing, and consumer protections.

Appearing on national television, on Capitol Hill, and at street rallies, Maggie opened a window on a movement dedicated itself to human liberation and social change, toward the elimination of injustice, oppression and exploitation. Under her influence, Gray Panthers soon became a non-governmental organization with offices at the United Nations in particular to champion women's issues around the globe. So nationally known was Maggie that she was memorialized in a PBS special called "Maggie Growls." Ralph Nader said hers was "the most significant retirement in modern American history".

Gray Panthers today are working toward a rebirth of the same dynamic activism that invigorated so many of all ages, to reigniting the spirit of activism that took the world by storm in the 70s and 80s. Their leadership hopes that in Maggie's story lies the clue to what boomers are looking for. Studies indicate boomers have not saved for "old age" and, even as Medicare and Social Security problems loom on the horizon, so will a new realization that we need to speak up for ourselves, and for the greater family, and know that involves speaking also for what we believe are our nation's ideals. We recognize that all peace, justice and environmental issues are connected. As an intergenerational movement, we know that caring and respect for our nation's elders goes hand and hand with that for our children. While it is perhaps easier to focus on just one issue, Gray Panthers have chosen the complex challenge of connecting issues, ranging from healthcare to housing and transportation, peace, and our environment.

As Maggie said, "I've never been able to turn down a good cause. I've come to see all injustices, no matter how small or seemingly unrelated, as linked." Gray Panthers are counting on that message to resonate with the boomer generation as they begin to face their retirement years.

Boomers and all others who are interested in Gray Panthers can contact  
Joan Lee at 916-332-5980 or [joanblee78@lanset.com](mailto:joanblee78@lanset.com)

Joan Lee



"...our politics are our deepest form of expression: they mirror our past experiences and reflect our dreams and aspirations for the future."

Paul Wellstone



## FROM WASHINGTON

### Matsui Office Helps with Medicare

Certain Low Income Subsidy recipients from 2006 Medicare may not be eligible for LIS in 2007. In Sacramento County alone, 3501 individuals are becoming un-redeemed for 2007. They are encouraged to reapply for extra help because some may be eligible. Others on LIS may be assigned to a different plan if their premium is above the \$2 regional low income premium subsidy. For Northern California, that premium is \$21.03.

### NEED PRESCRIPTION DRUG ASSISTANCE? TRY "PAP"

Many of the major drug manufacturers offer financial assistance programs for people enrolled in Medicare Part D who have difficulty covering the cost of their medications. They may even offer free supplies of medications through in-kind product donations for low income individuals, augmenting any existing Rx coverage they may have.

These programs vary by what they offer and what the eligibility criteria is for the program. You can find out whether a Patient Assistance Program is offered by the manufacturers of the drugs you take by visiting our Pharmaceutical Assistance Program website at: <http://www.medicare.gov/pap/index.asp>. Contact information and program details are included and the website is updated once a month. You will also find links to other information which is contained in the Office of the Inspector General.

Patient Assistance programs do not count towards a Part D beneficiary's true

out-of-pockets cost, used to determine whether an individual has reached the threshold for catastrophic coverage under the Part D benefit.

For some low-income and perhaps under 65-disabled persons with heavy costs, it may well pay to check this out.

### Leadership Award Announced

**Flash! Joan B. Lee has just been awarded one of 30 outstanding volunteer leader awards in the state of California.** The award, presented by the U.C. Berkeley School of Public Health, comes with as \$500 check for the Sacramento Gray Panthers! In addition, Joan will receive leadership training and monthly mentoring in support of our organization's continuing community work.

The presentation ceremony will take place at Jack London Square, February 23-24.



<http://www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?list=type&type=18>

**Welcome to Gray  
Panthers, Thelma White!**



## FROM THE STATE CAPITOL

### MINIMUM WAGES INCREASED, BUT IS IT ENOUGH?

California is one of 17 states that raised its minimum wage this January. California's minimum wage rose to \$7.50 per hour on January 1, and will increase to \$8.00 per hour in 2008. In 2007, 28 states and the District of Columbia will have a minimum wage above the federal rate of \$5.15 per hour, and 10 of those states will also index their minimum wage to inflation to keep pace with the cost of living. A recently updated report from the California Budget Project on "California's Minimum Wage," is available at [www.cbp.org](http://www.cbp.org).

We will continue to press for what is best known as a Living Wage for all workers. Though many may think this is an impossibility, a society that values its workers is rewarded with workers who purchase homes, cars, products, education for their children. The crime rate goes down, while the overall climate of the community is improved. Remember, as of last August 13.2 percent of Californians - more than one in eight - had incomes below the federal poverty level, a higher share than in 2001!

Californians overall continue to be among the highest percentage without health coverage. Workers are losing purchasing power and there is a greater disparity between the highest income and the lowest. With union representation down from a quarter of all workers to a fifth, there are fewer and fewer speaking out for improvements. As Paul Krugman noted recently, "What we see today is the result of a quarter-century of policies that have systematically reduced workers' bargaining power...The big disconnect (between highest and lowest earners) provides as good an argument as you could possibly want for smart, bold populism."

That's one reason we stand on the line with SEIU, IHSS workers, UniteHere, and others. Watch in the coming months for more activity here in Sacramento on the issue. We want Gray Panthers there at the sidewalk rallies and speaking out to management.

### MEET AND GREET, SENIORS AND LEGISLATORS TALK AND LISTEN

The "usual suspects" Betty Perry (OWL), Bill Powers (CARA), Gary Passmore (CCS), and Margie Metzler and yours truly have been making the rounds of various offices, both federal and California legislative. At Congresswoman Matsui's office we were greeted by District Director Chris Norem and two other staff members with a cordial assurance that he would carry our message to Washington - government negotiation for Medicare Part D and closing the donut hole. This same message was brought to Senator Boxer's office, Stacey Lybeck-Smith, Deputy State Director, and to Congressman Lungren's Peter Tateishi, Intergovernmental Affairs staff person.

CARA and CCS both held legislative "meet-ups" where we had a chance to look over the new legislators. I must say we all were pretty pleased at the level of excellence in choices the voters made for California this past fall. In a special meeting with new Alameda County Assemblyman Sandre Swanson, I broached the issue of age discrimination in the employment, and was pleased at the response that, as new Chair of the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee, he will consider a hearing on the issue. Gray Panthers are increasingly hearing of this problem and themselves thinking of a Sacramento special "listening session" - perhaps to assemble data for the hearing.

Next month's newsletter will offer some of the new legislation we will be supporting.

## Governor's Health Plan

As we go to press, details of the Governor's major health care proposal are yet to be revealed. Information we have already received indicated that he will "address the following considerations":

1. Employers shouldn't find it impossible to provide health insurance.
2. Individuals "deserve" a system supporting health and wellness as a priority.
3. Doctors and hospitals need more reimbursement.
4. "Insurers need accountability and flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing marketplace."
5. And no one segment of the healthcare system is unfairly burdened.... we all need to share in the responsibility.

We need to be ever cautious about being too conciliatory in the face of what may wind up costing workers too much of the burden and giving too much "flexibility" in this system. Our concern is and will continue to be that we do not give our system over to private corporations! Healthcare should NEVER be treated like purchasing cars and lego blocks. One of the first principles of Gray Panthers was and remains that HEALTHCARE IS A HUMAN RIGHT.

The \$5 Billion shortfall in this year's budget should, in fact, be just that much more reason for the Governor and the Legislature to take another and more in-depth look at Universal Single Payer Healthcare. They have apparently done a good job of selling the public that Senator Kuehl's SB 840 was NOT good, but we believe differently. We know how much it would save in the state's budget, how much it would offer Californians, and that it could actually wind up the model to lead the nation toward Universal coverage. We cannot continue to fall behind the rest of the world in this area!

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, you really could be a leader!!

**We commemorate the foundation of our freedom – the ratification of the Bill of Rights on December 15, 1791. The League of Women Voters has always held that a democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government.**

**Now more than ever, we must be vigilant in guarding our civil liberties!**



***"It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error."***

*United States Supreme Court,  
American Communications  
Association v. Douds, 339 US 382  
(1950)*



## ENVIRONMENT

### PROTECTION FOR OUR OCEANS - AN ECOSYSTEM IN TROUBLE.

Once in a while there is good news about the environment. This time it's about our oceans. Late in December, thanks to leadership from Senator Barbara Boxer and Representative Sam Farr, Congress took a big step to rein in overfishing in our oceans by passing the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Our oceans are home to more than 97 percent of all life on Earth. They are critical to the survival of the planet. They help control our climate, provide more oxygen than rain forests, shelter for countless animals, raw materials for medicine and food for all of us. Our oceans' coasts also provide endless recreational opportunities and are a source of spiritual renewal for many. Over 51 percent of the population of the United States now lives in coastal counties. The number of people living in coastal watershed areas is projected to reach 165 million by the year 2015.

But our oceans are in trouble. Fish are being killed faster than they can reproduce; we are dumping billions of pounds of plastic into the ocean; and oil and gas companies are looking for ways to suck the last drop of oil and gas off our coast even if it means soiling our most pristine beaches. As you know, overfishing throws ecosystems out of balance and threatens the long-term viability of people and communities that depend on fishing to survive. So the passage of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the primary law that regulates overfishing in our oceans, was welcome news.

<http://www.environmentcalifornia.org>

Beach clean-ups, recent reports, and newspaper and magazine articles all point to one thing: our oceans are a dumping ground and they can't take it much longer. Dangerous chemicals from plastics in the ocean are causing fish to die and affect the whole food chain. In California we need to lead the way for the rest of country by passing legislation that will reduce the amount of garbage that goes into the ocean.

The oil lobby would like us to believe that after Katrina and Rita, we can drill our way out of our nation's energy problems. But we know that opening our shores to drilling would only put our beaches and coastal waters at great risk for a small, short-term supply of oil and gas. We can do better. If we allow offshore drilling, we'd still face a long-term energy crisis while our environment and economy would face new risks due to the pollution and potential for catastrophic spills off our coast. We need to tell our leaders in Congress to stop the rush to drill and start pushing sensible choices like getting better gas mileage from our cars and trucks.

Our oceans comprise more than three-quarters of the Earth's surface. With the proper stewardship, we can restore vitality to these vast, treasured ecosystems. Of course, our oceans need as much protection as they can get. From oil drilling to run-off pollution, we need to do more. We Gray Panthers work a great deal with an organization called Environment California. Check out their web site so you can occasionally send Congress a personalized card asking them to do everything they can to protect the environment

<http://static.environmentcalifornia.org/eca.asp?id=455&id4=ES>

(This article is a shortened version from one sent by Dan Jacobson, Env. Ca. Legislative Dir.)



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

**Chairperson:** Joan Lee 916-332-5980  
**Secretary/Program:** Pat Naylor  
**Treasurer:** Lola Young  
**Staff Project 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:** Jim and Doris Sanford.  
 Interim: Dale Kooyman  
**Members at Large:** Edie Poole, Pat Naylor, Jean Mellberg, Betty Merle, Judy Bietz  
**Computer Assistant:** Beverly Crosby  
**Webmaster Staff:** 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.*



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

## **Ruth Jane Holbrook**

Born: Oct. 13, 1931

Died: Dec. 1, 2006

Remembered for: Longtime anti-war activist and labor leader; past president of the Sacramento Central Labor Council and head of Service Employees International Union, Local 22; led anti-war demonstrations and campaigned for "living wage" laws; former co-owner of May Day Bookstore

**We join the community in sadness over the  
death of Ruth Holbrook, labor activist and  
Central Labor Council leader**

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