

**Minutes, Gray Panthers Affiliation of California Networks**  
**Hosted by So. Alameda network, San Lorenzo, Betty Moose**  
**Saturday, May 24, 2008**

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1. **Social time**
2. **Call to Order**
3. **Welcome & Introductions**
4. **Appointment of Recording Secretary of the day** (Margie Metzler)
5. **Acceptances for additions to Agenda**
  - Ralph Copperman announced that the Contra Costa chapter is no more. Health issues played a part. Ralph thanked the chapter and Betty Moose in tern thanks Ralph and the CC chapter for all they've done. We all cheered Ralph and Doris.
  - SF noted that Michael Lyon went to the emergency room the night before and therefore was not presents. They did not yet have an update on his condition, but the entire group sent their very best to him.
6. **Reports from Networks**
  - **Sacramento**  
 Joan reported changes in the steering committee. Jim Sanford died this year, and Doris has since sold the house and moved to the mountains. Barbara Hopkins in the new leader of the transit group, along with Michael Dunne of RIL and Dogfite. Margie and Joan went to an SB840 HCA meeting in LA. Sen. Kuehl is terming out, so we don't know where 840 goes from here. Joan is on a strategic planning committee which is formulating plans through 2012. We need to get businesses involved, Dems., and moderate Repubs. We are working on eliminating egregious practices in assisted living homes; with leg. by Leno, Wolk, Bass. We are trying to work with improving worker conditions at Blue Diamond (the "Wal-mart of the nut industry".) There was a huge march on May Day in SF. Joan helped start a new chapter in Chico; 5 members to start. Margie did a presentation for them. They were referred by SEIU. Chapter had a party in honor of the New Deal. We've been working on reducing the awful impact of the Gov's proposed budget cuts, and held a meeting on nuclear energy, with both a pro and a con speaker.
  - **San Francisco:**

They are working to mobilize action on June 19 insurance people (AHIP), who were foolish enough to choose SF for their national convention. Several chapters will be there. Sonia went to Venezuela, and reported her experiences back to the group. They had a Winter Soldier meeting, and a meeting with Emily Rauss as speaker, from CalPERS. Also had a meeting on Immigration/Labor. Howard Vicini, Ch. 29 (Access TV in SF) will meet with Michael.. Glenn Davis taped a program. Access TV in on channel 29 if you have Comcast and live in San Francisco. Click here <http://accessf.org/> if you don't either live in SF or have Comcast, and shows can be viewed there. But you still have to know the time and date.

- **Berkeley:**

They have turned in a written report. Several fundraising activities. They had a showing of *Pete Seeger: The Power of Song* and raised over \$4000. They also sell the videos and several people purchased them there. They also make money on their great T shirts. You can order them directly from their supplier. Mary Magill and Nancy from Global Exchange presented a meeting on Getting rich off the War and Jim Soper reported on voting machines. Margot has given more talks on Iran, and they have worked at Marine Recruiting events.

- **Contra Costa:**

Mary reported on Healthy Communities Network, a group which started with Wal-Mart and wanted a real coalition. They contributed \$500 to the Network and have gotten 3 years of Mary's labor in return. The group also has a report on the site to do redevelopment money to communities. Worked with the Tides foundation in San Francisco. They created 10 minute sports to be aired twice a week on the Thom Hartmann Show, at 960 Green: <http://www.green960.com/main.html> Mary is also working to recall the Suisun City Council. Report from Out of the Box, fighting box stores. She gave a report to the network on Contra Costa Bridge Communities. She talked about the situation with Guy Houston, who was termed out, then sought the Pombo Seat, and then challenged his own chief of Staff. Now running against Joan Buchanan. Ralph noted that corporations can have socialism, but not people. The group made a presentation to Ralph and Doris, in her absence, presenting a plaque and pictures from the Susan Prather Fresh Start event. There were over 600 people present; Ralph went out in a blaze of glory!

- **Marin:**

June reported that they are fighting indiscriminate spraying of the light brown apple moth, along with 100's of other people. They are having a huge march to end the spraying: Marin people and SF people will march across the Golden Gate Bridge and meet in the middle, with a Gray Panthers meeting to follow.

- **So. Alameda County:**

Still working for SB840, they are working to get all the Commissions on Aging to support. Had a wonderful presentation by Carol Bailey and were shocked to find out that many on the Aging rroup knew what 840 is! They marched with the ILWU on May Day... there is a video on You Tube. ([http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=ILWU+May+Day&search\\_type=](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ILWU+May+Day&search_type=)). They are working with the Prop 13 Reform Task Force (is this it? <http://tracydems.org/blog/?p=17> ). There are lots of loopholes including to oil depletion allowance. This group sends out postcards to legislators at every meeting.

## Report from Nation

- **Convention Program:** Jim Dawson and Brook Hollister send their regrets. Joan talked about the convention; we plan to send at least one person from each of our networks if possible. It will be in Detroit, a perfect place for the discussion of union and economic issues. Sept. 25-

28, 2008. Materials available on state site: [www.gpcal.org](http://www.gpcal.org). Sacramento plans to send 5 people, including 2 in wheelchairs. (Joan got a \$214 round trip fare on Frontier.) John Conyers will speak, a visit is planned to the African America Museum, and Mr. Butler, noted gerontologist, will speak. Networks can send as many people as they want, but voting will be one vote for every 25 member in the network. Network must send a list of dues-paid member to national to determine no. of votes. Berk has over 200 members, and Sac. Has close to that number. We took resolutions from the National page, had our member check them out and update or correct if necessary. (<http://www.gpcal.org/documents/GPnationalissues2008.ppt>)

- **Any network can nominate someone for the newly created Maggie Kuehn Award.** Deadline is Jun 15<sup>th</sup>. I have written Susan Murany for a link to the nominating doc since I can't find it.
- **National resolution process:** See above.
- **New National Board Members.** Joan had form for nomination of new board members. Margot Smith is interested and we all (except SF) were excited and happy to nominate her on the spot.
- **Dues:** \$125 per year per network.

**Lunch**

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**7. Report from Legislative Liaison**

Joan gave Convenors a package of legislation information. It included info on healthcare reform. There were fewer bills, but they had to be vetted in a hurry. Any bill with any \$\$ is in suspense or dead due to budget crisis. Deadline for all bills is next Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup>. Joan discussed the legislative schedule each network received. The cuts are not across the board. One person could lose SSI cola, durable goods, disabilities cuts, etc. while well-off people will feel nothing. This is NOT shared responsibility! Adult Day Cares are closing, and they are the linchpins that allow people, to stay in their homes. Sheila Kuehl has a bill on infections people get in hospitals Non-fiscal bills will be discussed in June. June 10<sup>th</sup> is the clean Money hearing. If you come to the Capitol at any time, please let Joan know so we can have a coordinated presence. Our seniors coalition is Bill Powers/CARA, Joan/GP, Garry Passmore at CCS, and Betty Perry, OWL. Groups like Forum and CLUW, whose focus is protecting pensions, don't join our groups. Sen. Scott is also termed out, and will be chair of the Community Colleges org. Steinberg will try to protect seniors on Public transit, Light Rail is not Public land, so this is complex legislation. Joan is in a new coalition called T4CF: **Together for California's Future**. Also includes Cal. Budget Project. Let Joan know if you want to participate.

Betty Moose presented flowers to join for all her work.

**8. Copperman Recognition**

See above.

**9. Discussion of Gray Panthers California**

In Michael's absence, Mitzi presented SF's point of view. They don't think it's democratic to make decisions without checking with every member before voting on any issue. "Everything is done not from the bottom up for from the top down." Education of members should be main goal. They think the whole network should make every decision. Discussion ensued on representative v. total democracy and the realities of holding back on making decisions till every member is contacted. SF doesn't think change is made by legislation, but by mass movement in the streets. They feel this group looks more like decision-making in smoke-filled rooms (without the smoke.) Emphasis on getting laws passed puts up a dichotomy that takes away action in the streets. Mitzi noted that their actions are concentrated on educating their members; other networks said they did also. They want:

- A state wide action group which lets everyone vote

- A focus group of our network convenors and or leaders who discuss a limited number of issues which are then brought to the quarterly meetings, such as single payer, and at that point a network can make the decision to participate or not.
- Actions should be proposed at the grassroots level and formulated and suggested at each network, then taken back to each network's members. Sonia added that opportunists could use the good name of Gray Panthers for their own purposes.
- There is no such thing as Gray Panthers California and it should not be references as such anywhere.
- Mary noted that while we can see that Mitzi is speaking from the heart and we honor that, at this point fully 7 hours have been spent discussing these issues and we just don't exactly know what we could do to make SF more comfortable.
- Joan asked for a vote of confidence and we voted **Yes**.

#### **10. Open Discussion on issues of concern**

- **Building Membership - tabled**
- Report on grant: Margie. The presentation now includes a lot of information on the history of healthcare in the US and also myths that abound in the public discourse and how to counter them. Please call or e-mail Margie if you or anyone you know wants a presentation or any other related help. Margie had copies of the 60 minutes segment on remote Access Medical work with the working poor in this country and a Frontline video called **Sick Around the World**. She is reaching into other media modalities to reach both people and advocates. This includes Access TV and radio, a healthcare blog on our site, videos, etc.

#### **11. Setting Next Meeting**

Not till after the National Convention in Sept. Oct. in Berkeley. Date and location TBD.

#### **12. Adjourn at 3**