



**New York Gray Panthers
244 Madison Avenue #396
New York NY 10016**

**telephone: 212 799 7572
email: GrayPanthersNY@yahoo.com
www.graypanthersNYC.org**

New York Gray Panthers Affirm Stands on War and Peace, Housing Issues, Universal Health Care

At the September and October meetings we discussed New York Gray Panther positions on issues at stake in the November 7 national and state elections and beyond. Sally Connors drafted the statement on "Peace," Anne Emerman, Jill Gerson, and Ronnie Cordina on "Housing," and Mike Texeira on "Universal Health Care." The three statements follow on pages 2, 3, and 4.



Convener Judy Lear (3rd from right) at Granny Peace Brigade demonstration September 10. Panthers Joan Davis, Roger Sanjek, and Mike Texeira also joined more than 100 marchers who crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, rallied at City Hall, and read names of troops killed in Iraq at the 9.11 Ground Zero site.

Upcoming Gray Panther Meeting:

Wednesday, November 8, 1-3 p.m. — "Post-Election Rant, Rave & Regroup." With guests XXX and YYY we will assess election results and plan for upcoming action.

Wednesday, December 13, 1-3 p.m. — "The Politics of Food." Fast food, transfat, zoning, green markets, obesity and diabetes epidemics ... join us with a guest speaker to confront serious questions about health, corporate control, and democratizing our food supply system.

Both meetings will be at Penn South, 330 West 28th Street (between 8th & 9th Ave.), Room 7A
Coming in 2007 >>> January 10, "The Outlook for Medicare," February 14 (Valentine's Day), "Peace and Love," March 14, "Making NYC Parks Accessible for All."

Flyers with details on speakers, location, & time will be mailed to NYGP members.

2006 NYGP officers: Convener, Judy Lear; Treasurer, Bob Wesner; Recording Secretary, Roger Sanjek; Communications Secretary, Shiuho Lin; board members, Joan Davis, Jill Gerson, Gloria Korecki, Marie Maher, Mary Springer, Michael Texeira.

Peace

The New York Gray Panthers are an organization for peace in the world. We believe pre-emptive war to be immoral and the murder of civilians that happens during wartime to be unconscionable. We believe the invasion and occupation of Iraq to be both immoral and illegal. **We call upon our elected officials to end this war and bring the troops home immediately.**

Hundreds of billions of dollars have been squandered on a war that never should have been started. Over 600,000 Iraqis have been slaughtered, thousands of our soldiers have been grievously wounded and almost three-thousand of our young men and women have been sent to die in a country that never did us harm.

This war was sold to us on the basis of weapons of mass destruction and ties between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda, the terrorist cell that attacked us on September 11, 2001. Both of those have proven to be untrue. We oppose this never-ending war of aggression. We ask our leaders to wage war only as a last resort, and if it must be waged, to plan for it adequately. This means to give our troops the proper equipment to keep them safe; to send enough troops to do the job; and to exercise safeguards against war profiteering.

No civilized society can sit passively by while genocide is being carried out in any part of the globe and to that end we call for the U.N. peacekeeping force to be sent to Darfur. We will not let Darfur become another Rwanda when the rest of the world closed their eyes and their ears and did nothing while innocent people were killed on a massive scale.

We want our leaders to tend to the business of this country, the health and prosperity of its people. We want them to realize that we truly live in a global village; we must share the earth in harmony if we want to protect the future of our children and our grandchildren.

We will support elected leaders who seek peaceful solutions whenever possible.

Housing

The New York Gray Panthers recognize that our nation, state, and city have a housing crisis. There is a growing gap between income and housing costs, and a growing shortage of homes and apartments low-income persons can afford. Millions are paying more than 30% of income for housing. The Congress and President cut federal funds for low income housing while giving billions in tax breaks to wealthy persons and owners of multiple homes. We support the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) national agenda:

- Establish a National Housing Trust Fund to build, rehab and preserve homes for people with the lowest incomes.
- Add housing vouchers to ease the waiting lists in communities across the country.
- Adequately fund, preserve and expand housing programs that are currently affordable - public housing, assisted housing, and vouchers.

- Reverse the Supreme Court decision allowing the seizure of private property (Eminent Domain heretofore only for public use) for private use. Support S.1314.IS.
- Re-establish the operating subsidy for federal-developed NYCHA public housing (160,000 units).

Studies by Pratt Center and Community Service Society (CSS) reveal that in recent years over 200,000 affordable rent-regulated apartments in NYC have been decontrolled, and another 40,000 government assisted housing units, e.g., Mitchell-Lama, have gone market. Additionally, the NYS Housing Finance Agency has diverted state funding and tax-free bonds from low-income housing development to luxury. We urge the state legislature to:

- Repeal the Urstadt Law to re-establish home rule control over housing policy, rent regulation and eviction laws.
- Preserve and expand project-based Section 8 and Mitchell-Lama housing.
- Restore tenant protections to stem the hemorrhaging of rent-regulated apartments; use state funding for the creation of new units for low-income persons.
- Exclude social security payments and supplemental social security income from the definition of "income" for the purposes of determining eligibility under Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE).
- Establish parity for Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) with SCRIE.
- Support A.10944 to amend Rent Stabilization Code to define demolition as the razing of the entire building, and require DHCR to hold mandatory hearings for all demolition cases. The courts and DHCR interpret 'demolition' as renovations that leave facades, walls and floors in place, thus evicting rent-stabilized tenants and converting to luxury housing.
- Re-establish the operating subsidy for state-developed NYCHA housing (14,000 units).

We support the Mayor's plan, *The New Housing Marketplace, Creating Housing for the Next Generation*, to create 165,000 new housing units through a NYC Housing Trust Fund (Battery Park City generated funds), and to preserve existing housing subsidies set to expire. Administrated by HPD, the plan is a positive first step in addressing the city's housing crisis (3.09% vacancy rate, lower than 5% definition of a housing emergency). We urge:

- Dedicate 5% of the units for elderly and disabled residents. Next generation housing fails to provide relief for today's low-income older and disabled city residents.
- The city's plan must preserve middle-income housing stock, e.g., Peter Cooper Village and Stuyvesant Town, and work against the gentrification of low-income neighborhoods.
- Re-establish the operating subsidy for city-developed NYCHA housing (7000 units).
- Support Intro. 340 which requires DHCR to notify in writing the community board and Council member in whose district an owner applies to evict regulated tenants for demolition.

Gray Panthers believe it is a basic human right for everyone to have adequate housing, and we will support actions that lead to housing for all in New York City.

Universal Health Care

It is estimated that upward of 50 million Americans are without medical insurance. Almost as many Americans are underinsured. As the cost of insurance spirals ever higher, many more lose their coverage each month because they can no longer afford to pay their premiums. Sadly, many Americans die, even when minimal medical interventions could have saved them, because they waited too long to seek treatment due to this lack of health coverage. Others are unable to purchase needed medication or skip doses due to the incredible cost.

The costs of health care in America are out of control. Almost 34% of all medical costs are charged to administrative and not direct health care services. Insurance premiums have increased some 73% in the last five years alone, with no end in sight. At present, health care is only affordable by the wealthy. This situation is inefficient, shameful and unacceptable.

In the richest nation in the world, with the most advanced health care on earth, wealth should not be the primary factor for receiving quality health services. Health care is a basic human right. The people should turn any government or elected official unwilling to ensure this basic right out of office.

In 2006 the New York Gray Panther network will only support and encourage its membership to endorse and vote for elected officials at the local, statewide and national levels who will pledge to work for, support, and enact legislation that brings about a single-payer, nonprofit, and universal health care system.



NETWORK REPORT Issue #6

NETWORK REPORT, the newsletter of the New York Gray Panthers, began in 1973 and was published continuously through 2000. After the NYGP network reorganized in 2003, NETWORK REPORT was revived in December 2004. Editor, Roger Sanjek rsanjek@earthlink.net