

Network Report

May/June 2007



Gray Panthers, NYC Network
244 Madison Avenue #396
New York NY 10016

telephone: 212 799 7572
web site: www.graypanthersNYC.org

Join Gray Panthers and Friends

1: Universal Health Care Hearing - Monday, May 21, 6:30-9 p.m.

Hudson Guild Elliott Center, 444 West 26th Street, between 9th & 10th Avenues

Speakers: **Ajamu Sankofa**, Healthcare Now

Mark Hannay, Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign

Denise Soffel, Medicaid Matters New York & Community Service Society

Roger Sanjek, Gray Panthers, NYC Network

& You! – Tell your story about why we need Universal Health Care

Light Refreshments at 6:30 p.m. **Entertainment** by Metro NYC Raging Grannies
Program begins at 7 p.m., with speakers followed by audience stories & action

We thank our co-sponsors of this program by:

Chelsea for Peace Copasetic Women Over 50 Goddard Riverside Senior Council
Healthcare Now Hispanic Senior Action Council Hudson Guild JPAC
Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign Metro NYC Raging Grannies
Penn South Social Action Committee Presbyterian Senior Services
Progressive Democrats of America Institute for the Puerto Rican-Hispanic Elderly
New York StateWide Senior Action Council, New York City
New York Network for Action on Medicare & Social Security (NYNAMSS)
Older Women's League, Greater New York Older Women's League, Brooklyn
Taiwanese American Association of New York

2: Gray Panther Dinner Meeting - Tuesday, June 12, 6 p.m.

Evergreen Restaurant, 10 East 38th Street, between Fifth & Madison Avenues

Program: "A View from the U.N.," with **Gray Panther U.N. delegation members**
(see page 3)

Cost: \$30 a person – send checks made out to "Gray Panthers" to:
Gray Panthers, 244 Madison Avenue, #396, New York NY 10016

RSVP: telephone: 212 799 7572/email: Swanmary@aol.com **Accessible to All?:** Yes

3: “New York is Our Home” Rally, Wednesday May 23, 5 p.m. at Stuyvesant Town, First Avenue between 14th and 23rd Streets

Join **Housing Here and Now** and dozens of New York City housing and grassroots groups demanding: *Repeal Rent Destabilization ... Preserve Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 Housing ... Stop Unfair Rent Increases and Harassment ... Ensure Adequate State Funding for the New York City Housing Authority ... Limit Rents for People with HIV/AIDS to 30% of Income.*

Panthers on the Prowl ... in New York City

Our **February** meeting on upcoming **Changes to the NYC Building Code**, held with the **Disability Network of NYC** and **Disabled in Action**, featured lawyers **Dennis Boyd** of **NY Lawyers for the Public Interest** and **Anne Davis** of the **Multiple Sclerosis Society**. **Anne Emerman** will lead our follow-up strategies to clarify proposed code language that is ambiguous or contains loopholes allowing unspecified “alternatives” to accessibility requirements in Local Law 58 passed 20 years ago. When the code comes before City Council committees in May and June, Gray Panthers will insist it maximize both “aging in place” and “visitability” for relatives and friends who are disabled.

In **March**: Convener **Judy Lear**, **Ronnie Cordina**, **Mike Texeira**, **Lani Sanjek**, and **Roger Sanjek** joined the weeklong **Granny Peace Brigade “Endless War” memorial** at the Times Square Recruitment Center to read names of Americans and Iraqis killed in the Iraq war.... **Joan Davis**, Judy, Lani, and Roger carried the New York Gray Panther banner at the mass **“March in NYC to End the War”** organized by **United for Peace and Justice** to mark four years since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.... We endorsed the **Taxis for All Campaign** calling for all of NYC’s 13,000 medallion cabs to be fully wheelchair accessible when each is replaced. If NYC made this decision it would greatly increase demand and spur production of the best accessible taxi model.

During **April**: **Estelle Katz** had our May 21 Universal Health Care Hearing flyer translated into Spanish and distributed 500 in the Chelsea area.... Judy, Ronnie, Joan, and **Shiuho Lin** represented the GPs at **State Senator Liz Krueger’s** Resource Fair, where they networked with other organizations and recruited new members.

In **May**: Anne Emerman was a speaker at **“Under the Radar: Old and Poor in a City of Riches,”** a forum on poverty among older New Yorkers organized by the **NY Citizens’ Committee on Aging**. In 2005 the city’s elderly poverty rate of 20.3% was double the national figure of 9.9%, with female, ethnic minority, immigrant, and disabled older New Yorkers the most likely to be poor.... Judy, Mike, and Roger attended a Washington D.C. meeting of the **National Gray Panthers** board of directors.

We mourn the passing of Gray Panthers Dave Brown, a former convener of the New York network, and veteran member and office volunteer Martha Frankel. A Martha Frankel Fund to be used for leadership training by network members has been created by Martha’s niece Jill Bisker, and augmented by donor Carol Sloan. Now at \$280, further contributions--with “Martha Frankel Fund” on the check memo line--can be sent to: Gray Panthers, 244 Madison Avenue, #396, New York NY 10016.

2007-08 Gray Panthers NYC officers: Convener, Judy Lear; Treasurer, Joan Davis; Recording Secretary, Roger Sanjek; Communications Secretary, Shiuho Lin; board members, Anne Emerman, Jill Gerson, Mary Springer, Michael Texeira, and Bob Wesner.



Gray Panther U.N. Delegation members Shiuho Lin, Joan Davis, and Judy Lear

... at the United Nations *(Hear more at our June 12 Dinner Meeting)*

Since 1977 the **National Gray Panthers** have had status with the U.N. Department of Public Information (DPI), and from 1981 “non-governmental organization (NGO) consultative status” with the Economic and Social Council. Currently the delegation is led by **Judy Lear** and includes **Joan Davis**, **Weishan Huang**, **Shiuho Lin**, and **Gloria Korecki**, all “EcoSoc” representatives, and DPI reps **Lynna Scott Carnegie** and **Jill Gerson**. Two Europeans, **Michael Mernagh** (Ireland) and **Elizabeth Sclater** (UK) represent the Gray Panthers in Geneva, Switzerland.

Each delegate chooses particular NGO committees or conferences of interest to them. Weishan is on the Board of the **Committee on the Status of Women**, with Judy serving on its **Sub Committee on Older Women**. Judy also is active in the **Committee on Ageing**, Joan in the **Peace and Disarmament Committee**, Shiuho in the **Migration Committee**, and Gloria involved with the **Disability Conference**.

2007 activities have included a Gray Panther-sponsored “**Grandmothers and Granddaughters: Transmitting Culture & Values**” program with **Mary Catherine Bateson** (daughter of anthropologist Margaret Mead), and Committee on the Status of Women Consultation Day, when National Gray Panther Co-chair **Sally Brown** of Minneapolis and young Minnesotans **Clarissa James**, **Amina Mohammed**, and **Patag Xiong** joined local New York City Gray Panthers at the U.N. and dinner afterwards.

... in Washington, D.C.

In **April** the **National Gray Panthers** as well as networks in California, Texas, and ours in New York City endorsed the Congressional **Employee Free Choice Act** to:

1. *Strengthen penalties for employers taking actions against workers forming unions.*
2. *Require mediation and binding arbitration when an employer and a new union cannot agree on an initial contract.*
3. *Grant unions recognition after a majority of workers sign authorization cards.*

... In Albany

In **April** Convener **Judy Lear** wrote **Governor Eliot Spitzer**:

"The Gray Panthers ... commend the actions of the Governor in the recent budget process.... In the area of health care, we support the Governor's efforts to reform Medicaid spending not by cutting services to recipients, [and] expanding coverage to all children and working families. As supporters of universal health care for all persons, we hail the Governor's efforts to move New York State toward covering greater numbers of uninsured and underinsured families. Gray Panthers also applaud the Governor's emphasis to use public policy and health care funding to support elderly and disabled persons who prefer to have their long-term care in the home and community rather than in institutions.

Gray Panthers further support the Governor's educational reforms to provide additional funding to urban school high-needs districts. For too long, children and youth have been shortchanged. We understand and endorse the importance of a high quality educational system for everyone, especially those in poverty areas."

In **May** **Governor Spitzer** replied:

"Thank you for your ... support of my efforts as they relate to the recently concluded budget process. Your kind words mean a great deal to me. Your comments, particularly about Medicaid and educational reforms, are appreciated. I applaud your interest in and support of these crucial issues. There is no question that health care costs and equity in our education system are two of the major concerns facing New Yorkers and all Americans today. I will certainly keep your comments in mind, and thank you for sharing the Panthers position on these important topics."

In **April** the Gray Panthers, NYC also signed-on a letter to Governor Spitzer from a **coalition of AIDs, disability, and Legal Services organizations** urging him to:

"Reverse a Pataki-era welfare policy that denies federal disability benefits to over a thousand disabled children in low-income households that receive the AIDS emergency shelter allowance."

NETWORK REPORT Issue #8

NETWORK REPORT is the newsletter of the Gray Panthers, New York City Network.

Editor, Roger Sanjek - rsanjek@earthlink.net