

# Network Report

Fall 2005



New York Gray Panthers  
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## Upcoming Gray Panther Meetings:

September 28

*“Freedoms and Civil Liberties Abroad and at Home”*

How are global freedoms from violence, repression, poverty, and disease and our U.S. civil liberties to speak out and protest faring in the post-9.11 world? Joshua Rubenstein, Northeast Regional Director of Amnesty International USA will, be our *speaker*. Bring your ideas for Gray Panther action in the months and year ahead.

**time & location: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. at Penn South Community Room 8A,  
343 8th Avenue at 27th Street**

October 19

*“The New Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit”*

The complicated new Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit begins January 1, 2006. Marketing by the different private insurance plans will start in October, and voluntary enrollment begins November 15 and continues through May 15. Lani Sanjek of New York StateWide Senior Action Council will give us both an overview, including how New York State’s EPIC prescription drug program will be affected, and an advocacy perspective.

**time & location: to be announced. New York Gray Panther members will receive a flyer with details before the meeting.**

November 9

*“Disability Rights for All in New York City”*

Gloria Korecki, chair of the NYGP Disability Issues committee, will lead a program about disability issues and strategies affecting New Yorkers. This follows up on our May program (see page 3).

**time & location: to be announced. New York Gray Panther members will receive a flyer with details before the meeting.**

Westside Peace Action alerts Gray Panthers to the Saturday September 24 March & Rally in Washington DC to “End the War on Iraq - Bring the Troops Home Now!” For bus information and 6 a.m. departure locations: [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org) 212 – 868- 5545.  
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**December 9** “Celebrate Maggie Kuhn’s 100th Birthday!”

Maggie Kuhn founded the Gray Panthers in 1970 when she was forced to retire at age 65. She led the national Gray Panther movement for the next 25 years until her death at age 89 in 1995. We will celebrate her 100th birthday with a holiday season party and the video “Maggie Roars” covering her life and accomplishments. See Page 4 for some words from Maggie that remain as inspiring today as when the New York Gray Panthers first began in 1972.

**time & location: to be announced. New York Gray Panther members will receive a flyer with details before the meeting.**

**VOLUNTEER GRAY PANTHERS NEEDED!!!**

WE NEED a volunteer GP to visit our office at West 86th Street and Amsterdam Avenue (at West Park Presbyterian Church) once every two weeks to pickup bills, mail, and membership dues, and be a liaison to board officers. If you think you can do this, or would like more information, please call 212 799 7572 and leave a message.

We also need volunteers to help improve and maintain our New York Gray Panther website. If you have web designer skills or the time to be a webmaster, WE NEED YOU. Please call 212 799 7572 and leave a message.

**Panthers the Prowl ...**

Westside Peace Action (which shares our office space) welcomes Gray Panthers to their Peace Corner on Fridays from 5:30 to 6:30 pm at Broadway a 96th Street.... In August former NYGP convener Lenore Fine visited New York from Berkeley, California, and received a 20+ year NYGP pin and certificate from Judy Lear at a luncheon attended by Joan Davis, Edna Graig, Lillian Sarno, and Blanche Saia.... Two dozen Gray Panthers and friends enjoyed our June 8 dinner meeting at Moonstruck Diner.... Roger Sanjek spoke about Social Security June 1 at the Central Queens YM & YWHA in Forest Hills.... Judy Lear, Gray Panther UN representative, and Michael Texeira, Northeast regional representative, are new members of the national Gray Panther board of directors. Judy also is now full-time Co-chair of the Subcommittee on Older Women of the UN New York NGO Commission on the Status of Women.... Marie Maher and Joan Davis participated in an April 30 tenant demonstration in front of Mayor Bloomberg’s home.... More than 75 people attended our April 20 forum “Sex, Seniors and the HIV Crisis” organized by Naomi Dagen Bloom.

<p><b>2005 NYGP officers: Convener, Judy Lear; Treasurer, Bob Wesner; Recording Secretary, Roger Sanjek; Communications Secretary, Shiuho Lin; board members, Joan Davis, Jill Gerson, Edna Graig, Gloria Korecki, Marie Maher, Mary Springer, Michael Texeira.</b></p>
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**Standing, Left to right: GLoria Korecki and Judy Lear with staff members from the OLive Gardens and Outback Steak House restaurants; sitting, Anne Emerman and Frieda Zames.**

At our May 11 meeting Frieda Zames of Disabled in Action/DIA, a retired mathematics professor and author with Doris Z. Fleischer of THE DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENT (2001), outlined housing accessibility (design features for wheelchair and scooter users and for the visually & hearing impaired), adaptability (kitchen & bathroom building code standards), and affordability (in particular expanding New York's SCRIE/Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption to disabled tenants). All MTA city buses now have lifts as a result of a 1980 DIA lawsuit and fifteen years of activism, but only some subway stations have elevators and the gap between the platform and subway cars remains a problem, unlike in other cities. She urged support of the Accessible Taxi Bill (City Council Intro 84)—only 29 of 14,000 taxis now accommodate wheelchairs—and the One Step Campaign to eliminate NYC's historical legacy of a single step in many stores and restaurants, a barrier for chair and scooter users.

Anne Emerman, social worker and DIA member, former Director of Mayor Dinkins' Office for People with Disabilities, and senior policy advisor to City Councilmember Margarita Lopez, highlighted the 1999 Supreme Court Olmstead decision calling for services to disabled persons in "Least restricted [community] environments," and pending federal legislation to allow Medicaid benefits "to follow the person" rather than go to institutions. She contrasted average costs of \$80 per day for home-based care vs \$160 for nursing homes. She added that NY Independent Living Centers are pushing the Pataki administration to enforce Olmstead, and explained how to file civil rights complaints to allow persons to receive services at home.

NYGP Gloria Korecki, also a DIA member, chaired the meeting. She and NYGP Mildred Blechman have testified for audible traffic signals for visually impaired pedestrians, common in many cities worldwide, and are working with City Councilmember Gale Brewer. Audience members brought up the need for longer traffic signal times at dangerous street crossings. Judy Lear presented NYGP framed certificates honoring the Olive Gardens Restaurant (696 Sixth Avenue at 22nd Street) and Outback Steak House (60 W. 23rd Street) for their Braille menus for visually impaired customers, a policy in each chain's 1,000 branches.

**Frieda Zames, 1932 —2005 — Activist, Leader, Teacher, Friend  
The New York Gray Panthers mourn her passing on June 16, 2005**

**In October 1972 ABC television aired a documentary about the Gray Panthers in which Maggie Kuhn voiced the new movement's rationale and viewpoint:**

### ***SERIOUS BUSINESS***

“We’ve been aware of racism in our society for a long time. The women’s Liberation movement has helped to surface concern for the sexist elements of society. Probably the newest liberation movement is the group of older people who are fighting ageism. The subject of age affects everybody. We’re all going to get old some day, but when we get to that place in life where we’re no longer young we’re immediately confronted with the fact that our society makes a fetish of being young. Now Gray Panthers are out to make old a beautiful thing, not something to be hidden, but something to be declared and affirmed. We have resources that no other group in our society have--for one thing, time, plenty of it. We have experience, plenty of it. We have wisdom, just the sheer wisdom of surviving. We have numbers. But the thing that we’re up to is that life is a continuum and age is a period of fulfillment, of continued growth and creativity where the inputs, the experience of a lifetime can be related to the group of people who are coming into their creative productive years, and to our young people. The Gray Panther movement will ultimately affect every community where there are old people. What we’re into is serious business. We’re going to change things for ourselves, and we’re going to make our neighborhoods, our communities, our state, our nation better, not just for us but for all human beings. Older people are people; they’re not a special breed set apart. Hopefully by organization of old people and young people we can help to change society and move it to a new sense of values--human-based values rather than thing-centered values. The potential results of our coalition have barely been glimpsed.”

MAGGIE KUHN

#### **NETWORK REPORT Issue # 3**

**NETWORK REPORT, the newsletter of the New York Gray Panthers, began in 1973 and was published continuously through 2000. After the “new” NYGP network was reorganized in 2003, it was revived in December 2004. Editor, Roger Sanjek [rsaniek@earthlink.net](mailto:rsaniek@earthlink.net)**