### Fall Events

#### Tuesday, September 22
- **6 pm - refreshments**
- **6:30-8 pm - program**
  - “Let’s Just Do It! Actions for a Better Environment”
  - Gray Panther NYC meeting with Gray and Green Coalition
  - Selis Manor, 135 W. 23rd St, between 6th & 7th Ave

#### Thursday, October 8
- **9:30 am to 5 pm**
  - Economic & Social Council Chamber, UN Headquarters

#### Friday, October 9
- **4 pm**
  - Film Forum, 209 West Houston St, between 6th & 7th Ave

#### Tuesday, October 13--Thursday, October 15
- **“Independent Living & Community Empowerment”**

#### Sunday, November 8
- **1:30 to 5 pm**
  - (doors open at 1 pm)
  - “End U.S. Militarization of the Pacific”
  - Granny Peace Brigade Teach-in on U.S. bases in Japan/Okinawa, the Philippines & South Korea.
  - Hunter College, 68th St @ Lexington Ave

#### Tuesday, November 17
- **7-11 pm**
  - “Picture the Homeless 10th Anniversary Gala-Fundraiser”
  - RSVP: gala@picturethehomeless.org
  - Judson Memorial Church, corner of Washington Square South & Thompson St
Gray Panthers Join Senior Outrage Coalition to Save Peter’s Place

During May and June Gray Panthers joined the newly formed Senior Outrage Coalition to protest New York City’s closure of Peter’s Place, the only homeless shelter dedicated to serving people over age 60. Located in St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Church on West 23rd St, Peter’s Place offered hot meals, showers, daytime shelter, and health and housing referrals to 130 persons a day. Its closure June 30 was part of city budget cuts and service consolidation plans.

Pointing out that one-third of New York City’s older population lives below the poverty line, SOC proclaimed, “We oppose targeting vulnerable elders, people with disabilities, our families, partners, neighbors and caregivers.” Coordinated by Maria Alvarez of NY StateWide Senior Action Council, SOC members from StateWide, the Gray Panthers, OWL, the NYC Alliance of Retired Americans, 1199/SEIU Retirees, the Hispanic Senior Action Council, and the Institute for Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly joined the demonstrations, as did the advocacy group Picture the Homeless.

![SOC Protest at City Hall June 24](image)
“Together We Walk, United We Stand for Health Care Reform”

On August 29, a rainy Saturday, New Yorkers walked through city neighborhoods urging passage of universal health care as embodied in the House and Senate HELP Committee bills, and in the spirit of Senator Edward Kennedy, who died just days before. More than 3,000 converged on Times Square for a rally where Congress members Carolyn Maloney and Jerrold Nadler, plus speakers from activist organizations, including Gray Panther Joan Davis, addressed the throng. Here is Joan’s speech:

My name is Joan Davis, I am 78 years old, and I am very happy with Medicare. My doctor’s very young but none of us are perfect. I like him for the way he listens; and when I need a specialist, Medicare provides it. As a Gray Panther, I am in support of a single payer plan. BUT TODAY, I am speaking as an older person who supports the public health insurance option. I resent the image that is promulgated that older people are only interested in their own health care. It happens not to be true. Everyone should be able to see a doctor when it is necessary. It is a shame that when people are sick they have to worry about finances. Everyone should have the care they need!

I would like to address the misconception that older people will be thrown into the fire by the proposed plans for healthcare insurance reform. Many years ago, my doctor asked me, in case I was in a position where I could not speak for myself, what kind of life sustaining measures would I want? I then spoke to my friends to find out what THEY were considering for THEMSELVES. This helped me clarify my thoughts, and I filled out a health care proxy. This is not euthanasia. I then began to feel much better now that my thoughts about the future were on paper. Also, it would relieve my relatives of the anxiety and pain of having to worry about what would be best for me.

Another misconception is that the public option plan will cost too much money. I am more concerned about insurance costs going higher than skyscrapers. Insurance companies have no desire for overall quality healthcare. When insurance companies deny health care, they are committing a tremendous injustice. And it is unacceptable. I think this is outrageous! Some commentators have not been honest about reform costs. They are saying the cost of a public option would be too high. Right now the cost of the status quo is horrendous! No amount of lobbying will change the fact that the new plan will save a tremendous amount of money. The emergency that confronts us is very severe. Everyone needs health care, not just the elderly. Medicare is an excellent model.
Panthers on the Prowl ...

May 30 Convener Judy Lear attended an evening vigil for single-payer universal health care in Union Square. June 21 she participated in a vigil in front of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah to protest the appearance of hatemonger Fred Phelps and his Westboro Baptist Church compatriots. Phelps is opposed to all organizations, like CBST, that support equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people; he has picketed the funerals of Matthew Shepard, servicemen killed in Iraq, and the security guard gunned down at the National Holocaust Museum. Judy was joined by Berkeley Gray Panther convener Margot Smith, who also joined Gray Panthers at the City Hall protest against closure of Peter’s Place...

September 12 Judy spoke at the Gray Panthers in California Statewide Meeting in her capacity as Chair of the National GP Board.... Judy also was heard August 12 on the BBC program "The World Today." You can listen to her interview by clicking the link on the National Gray Panther website: www.graypanthers.org.

Joan Davis’ exhibit “For Peace and Development: Disarm Now!” was featured at the Epiphany Branch of the New York Public Library during August. Her message, in part: “The carbon footprint of the military is enormous. When [its] total ... footprint is considered, our finding alternative ways of solving our political problems becomes clear.” On September 10 Joan was a speaker at Judson Memorial Church, and on September 13 she addressed an OWL luncheon.

Roger Sanjek taped interviews about his book, Gray Panthers, for broadcast Sunday, September 27, on Nashville Public Television’s “A Word on Words,” and Pennsylvania Cable Network TV’s “PA Books.” October 14 he will speak at the NY StateWide Senior Action Council convention on “Age & Activism, 1970-2040: Looking Back, Looking Forward.”
Now is the time! If you have a National Health Care Town Hall Meeting scheduled by any member of Congress near you – PLEASE GO! They need our help and support. They need to hear rational, smart voices at these meetings. They also need to hear that there are people who still want a Single Payer system.

I was in Upstate New York this past weekend visiting a college friend who informed me of a Town Hall Meeting on Highway 9 at a roadside vegetable stand.

“Do you want to go? It is being put on by Congressman Scott Murphy, a brand new Democrat elected when Senator Gillibrand was appointed to take Senator Clinton’s place.” she said.

“Sure! I’ve heard about these meetings being disrupted by yelling and screaming people who want to stop any role of the government in health care decisions.”

Sure enough! The Liberty Counsel with its 10 page line-item misinterpretation of sections and pages of HR 3200 were there with placards and protesters. They had teamed with the Tea Party Patriots. One woman actually had a sign that said “I don’t want to be euthanized!” The scare tactics and verbiage were all there!

Thank goodness MoveOn, Planned Parenthood, HealthCare for All and others came. The crowd was well over 500 people and some words were fired back and forth. But Representative Murphy did a superb job of controlling and the crowd “shhhhushed” out-of-line agitators.

This Congressman happens to lean toward the Public Option and was beautifully articulate as to why. He answered over an hour’s worth of questions, which were often tirades. There was one very good question about Single Payer being on the agenda and he answered it by saying, “It is my understanding that the bill will be brought to the floor. Personally, I am not at this time supporting it.” At least he was honest!

I came away with a sense of pride for our freedom of speech. I’m not sure that anyone’s mind was changed, but I think Congressman Murphy heard both sides. We need to be heard!

I urge you to go to a Town Meeting. Let people know there are Single Payer supporters and that we, the Gray Panthers, are still speaking out on behalf of the issue. We encourage honest, fair exchanges of ideas and points of view in a respectful environment. GO! Let our voice be heard.

Peace,

Judy.

Judy Lear, National Chair
Check out the National Gray Panthers website --

www.graypanthers.org

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2009 Membership Form

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