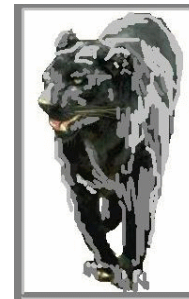


GRAY PANTHERS of Sacramento On the Prowl



P O Box 19438, Sacramento, CA 95819..... 916-332-80 www.gpcal.org
Volume 28 Number 4..... April 2006

***** NEXT GENERAL MEETING *****

**Gray Panthers
GENERAL MEETING
JULY 11 12:30 P.M.
POT LUCK PICNIC**

HART SENIOR CENTER, 27th and J Streets

Especially honoring those who give of their time and energies for others.

**FREE SENIOR LEGAL HOTLINE HAS MOVED
TO RICHARDS BLVD.**

Need legal advice? If you are 60 years or older, you can get help with health care decisions, income eligibility for Medi-Cal, estate planning , power of attorney, conservatorships...and more. The Senior Legal Hotline has moved to Richards Blvd. Their phone number is still 916-551-2140 or 800-222-1753. Look at www.seniorlegalhotline.org for more tips.



IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Town and Country Democratic Club's 12th Awards Dinner will be held Wednesday, July 26 at 6 P.M. at Eskaton Village Ballroom, 3939 Walnut Avenue, Carmichael. The keynote speaker will be Attorney General Bill Lockyer, candidate for State Treasurer. The Robert Matsui Award for Public Service will honor Joan B. Lee, and Kevin Murphy will receive the Great Grassroots Award. Tickets are \$50 for the dinner. For information, call Arnie Godmintz at 916-332-5980.



**CIRCLE YOUR CALENDAR FOR THIS
IMPORTANT PANEL DISCUSSION**

Ethics in an Aging Society: No Easy Answers
Thursday, October 19, 2006 8 A.M. to 2 P.M.
Elks Lodge #6 6446 Riverside Blvd.
Sacramento, 95831

Panel Moderator: Harry R. Moody, Ph.D.
Director of Academic Affairs, AARP
Registration materials available later.

For information: Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center
916-971-0893/800-635-0220
4 Continuing Education Units available

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY will be celebrated on Saturday, August 26 with a Suffrage Parade to the State Capitol starting at 10 A.M. to remind us all of the struggle to win the right to vote. Check cnorberg@extreme.net for further details.



FROM WASHINGTON

Our National Gray Panthers Statement on Iraq (Draft)

Whereas, the U.S. invaded Iraq because the Bush Administration embraced neoconservative policies of U.S. domination of world affairs through expanded military spending and pursuing "pre-emptive" wars without respectful consultation of other countries, and

Whereas, The United States presence in Iraq has not brought stability, peace, or prosperity; it has not brought about reliable water, electricity, health care, nor education, and United States presence has brought about continued destruction and death, not only to our troops, but to Iraqis, and

Whereas, it is in the mutual interests of the United States and Iraq for the infrastructure to be rebuilt and retained by the people of that nation as soon as possible, and

Whereas, a significant number of Americans are joining legislators, analysts, peace activists, and bereaved families in publicly embracing a clear anti-war position, calling for an end to our occupation of this nation;

Be it therefore resolved that Gray Panthers urge the President and Congress to provide generously and expeditiously for the rebuilding of reliable systems of public health, education and for the development of a viable Iraqi economy, and

Be it further resolved that the United Nations orchestrate the rebuilding of Iraq, in accordance with the decisions of all the Iraqi people, and that the U.S. President and Congress to provide adequate financial support for these efforts, and

Be it further resolved that Gray Panthers will take a proactive action position, including participation in peaceful demonstrations and rallies, and by contacting their Senators and Congressional Representatives, and

Be it further resolved that Gray Panthers, as individuals and as Networks, will work to end the bloodshed, begin the healing and bring our troops home!

PEACEFUL THOUGHTS TO CENTER US

By Joan B. Lee

I have just returned from a weeklong Elder-hostel experience right on Second Mesa with the Hopi. It was nothing short of amazing!

There is a great deal of difference in Hopi and other Native Americans, who refer to themselves as "Indians."

The Hopi were never invaded and massacred and had dreadful things done by other tribes or the Spanish invaders. They say it was because the American government didn't want their land for anything, it was so lacking in worth. So they remained untouched after ejecting the terrible Spanish from their mesas in the 1600's. It was the Navajo who tried, unsuccessfully, to take their lands. They are left with just the three mesas, completely surrounded by Navajo. Boarding schools run by religious sects like Mennonites and Baptists were real problems, and you know about that...

But they remain a happy, peaceful people dedicated to helping each other and teaching respect for the earth to anyone who will learn and try to follow their path... hence, the Elder-hostel being allowed to come there.

My hosts think I am great because I am an activist working "for others."

They say that is the Hopi way.

The mind is like a parachute. It does not function until it opens.





FROM THE STATE CAPITOL

Senate bill 1329 proposes to give low-income residents more opportunity to access healthy foods. If passed, this legislation would create a statewide program providing loans and grants, in order to:

- Establish grocery stores in low-income communities
- Revitalize existing markets, particularly small stores in low-income communities
- Establish and enhance farmers' markets in low-income communities

Many Californians do not have access to the fresh fruits and vegetables that encourage healthy eating, especially those who live in low-income neighborhoods. As an example, middle and upper class communities in the Los Angeles area have 2.3 times more supermarkets than per capita low-income communities. Minorities, who are more likely to live in low-income communities than whites, are disproportionately at risk for health consequences linked with poor diet such as obesity, diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

LET YOUR SENATOR KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT SB 1329 TODAY!

ABOUT NRDC

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a nonprofit environmental organization with 1.2 million members and online activists, and a staff of scientists attorneys and environmental experts. Its mission is to protect the planet's wildlife and wild place, and ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things.

To contact the NRDC, call 212-727-4511 or e-mail nrdcaction@nrdc.org.

**We mourn the loss of
JANIS DENNIS
and
NANCY RUHIG
Wife of Ted Ruhig**



ASK GOVERNOR TO PROTECT OUR OCEANS!

Three proposed ocean management plans are before Governor Schwarzenegger to protect our oceans that need rehabilitation to flourish.

Our oceans are home to more than 97% of the life on earth, provide more oxygen than rain forests, and shelter countless animal species. Oceans are critical to the survival of life on our planet. Scientists recommend Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) to create protected areas along our coast, more like national parks protect our natural wonders on land.

Industrial fishing has reduced world wide population of large predatory fish (sharks, swordfish and tuna) by 90% in just 50 years. Fifty-three species and subspecies of marine fish are at risk of extinction; 35 more are threatened.

Biodiversity within marine parks can be 50% higher than in fished areas. Fish inside these areas are older and can produce healthy offspring to replenish their species.

These "marine parks" allow all recreation, transit and anchoring, but limit fishing depending on the needs of the specific habitat.

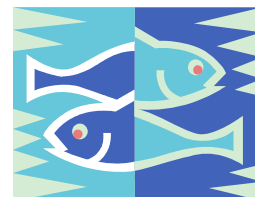
As directed by the Marine Life Protection Act in 1999, a task force has put together three scenarios for ocean protection. All three will be forwarded to the Governor, but only one will be implemented.

POWERFUL COMMERCIAL INTERESTS ARE LOBBYING FOR CONTINUING OVERFISHING.

Please help by urging selection of Package 2.

Send a letter including the date, 3 or 4 reasons why you feel ocean protection is necessary for protecting California's oceans to:

**The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol, Sacramento, California 95814**



Joan Lee's Legislative Report

The Legislative Year at the Capitol continues to be a little strange. The political climate of departing members and anticipation of elections has flavored everything. So far this year, Medi-Cal dominated advocacy efforts. It continues even now with current efforts to pass AB 2667 (Baca), that would allow California to monitor and deny new licenses to any Medicare Part D insurer which had a bad record in other states. Further, all of us in the grassroots arena are still urging coverage of the co-pays for Medi-Cal clients now on Medicare Part D, as this is a serious problem.

Currently, we are awaiting information about how the legislature will resolve the Governors Budget. With a very large increase in revenue, from the wealthy individuals and corporations, we continue to try for the SSI/SSP COLA reinstatement to catch up with inflation. Of course we want to use some of that increase to repay or to pre-pay outstanding debt (\$1572 billion), to increase the budget reserve and to repair levees. But we do not want to forget the poor, often seniors on SSI who pay large co-pays for many prescriptions monthly.

Turning to discussion of legislation, we are strongly in support of AJR 36 (Hancock) which called for the end to the Iraq War and bringing home California's National Guard troops immediately. This resolution will shortly go to the Senate floor. Contact your local Senator (Deborah Ortiz in Sacramento). Her district office is at 1020 N Street, Room 575, and she needs to hear about the need for those troops to man the fire line in what is sure to be a bad fire season, and to be here for other state emergencies as they are meant to do... not fighting wars! Ortiz' office phone number is 916-324-4937. Legislators listen a little better at District offices when speaking to constituents!

We have supported or opposed, to date, 87 bills this session, about par for Gray Panthers annually. There were a number of bills that addressed various aspects of financial protections. Negrete-McCloud's AB 770, which is still being amended as it moves along, would provide an ombudsman for troubled CIDs. AB 1363, Jones, sets standards for often wildly irresponsible conservators over the poor, mentally or physically disabled unable to handle their own affairs. Scott's SB 192 would place high standards on those marketing and selling annuity policies to seniors—we have heard tales of selling 20 year annuities to 80 year olds! And SB 1609, Simitian, sets standards on reverse mortgages.

IHSS so far is on a roll for changes they have fought for years! High-level changes to that program please caregivers and advocates. In the Assembly, there is a lengthy list of measures beginning with AB 2468 regarding the use of Live Scan background checks for workers, that will improve the workings of that system. We are all grateful for Sacramento Gray Panther, Lola Young, who is perhaps one of the best persons to testify on IHSS issues. We will prevail on her to write an article for the newsletter on the situation.

We strongly support an indexed minimum wage, with the ongoing movement of Cedillo's SB 1162, hoping the Governor finally sees the light on indexing by raising the wage to keep up with inflation. Interesting how so many of those corporate business interests fighting this measure are the very ones who year after year get COLA's, raises, and better benefit packages! Is there a disconnect here?

We continue to call on you to come to Sacramento when and if you can to join me and other Sacramento Gray Panthers who can make it to hearings. On June 20th the Berg "Compassionate Choice" measure will be before the Assembly Judiciary Committee, and Sacramento Gray Panthers will be there! We would love to know how many Gray Panthers really respond, so please e-mail joanblee78@lanset.com when you do any of those things.



Thanks to Gray Panthers....

Victory in the Vioxx case is attributed to Gray Panthers who signed the *amicus curiae*, "friend of the court" brief submitted last fall in a New Jersey case against Merck. The disputed position now allows nationwide class action to be used against the pharmaceutical company. **Thanks!**



CALIFORNIA NEWS

BUDGET COMMITTEE VOTES TO RESTORE SSI COLA'S

June 10: The combined Legislative Budget Conference Committee voted 4-2 to repeal 2005 budget action that would have withheld the federal cost of living increase for three months in January through March 2007. Both houses rejected the Governor's proposal (which he later withdrew) to extend the withholding an additional 15 months starting April 2007.

SSI recipients rejoiced that their voices had been heard, at least at this stage in negotiations for the final budget this year. Our special thanks to Chair Senator Wes Chesbro.



Stem Cell Policy

LEGAL CHALLENGES SLOW STEM CELL RESEARCH GRANTS

State business and educational leader's attempts to start the educational components of the \$3 billion stem cell research program have been moved forward by about \$12.1 million in grants awarded by the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine.

Months of litigation about the voter-approved measure in November 2004 has held up the issuance of state bonds meant to fund the training of a new crop of scientists. The \$12.1 million is to be used to finance training courses for doctoral and clinical fellowships in 16 institutions.

The program is in limbo because of lawsuits by opponents of embryonic stem cell research who challenge its constitutionality.

An Opinion on Stem Cell Research

By Joan B. Lee

If you ever have any thought of supporting President Bush's efforts to restrict embryonic stem cell re-

search, a visit to a facility housing advanced cases of Alzheimer's disease should quickly change your mind.

While there is no assurance that stem cell research will result in a cure for Alzheimer or Parkinson diseases, spinal cord injuries or other deadly and crippling ailments, it's certainly worth a try. The cost of pursuing this research is a "drop in the bucket" compared to the hundreds of billions of dollars spent on a war in Iraq, or the massive tax breaks the Bush administration has given Americans wealthiest citizens.

It is interesting to note that nearly every survey taken on this subject shows strong support for stem cell research, except for hardcore right wingers. And many such strident conservatives take the position that this research is "morally questionable." Again, it should be pointed out that these embryos, if not used for research, would be discarded.

AB 32 COULD REALLY REDUCE GLOBAL WARMING IN CALIFORNIA

Global warming threats call for immediate action!

California can reasonably cut its global warming pollution by 25% by 2020, and 75-80% by 2050, just by using our state's size and political clout in innovation and investing in far-reaching solutions.

This will be of direct benefit to our state economy by creating more job and energy independence.

Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez and Assembly Member Fran Pavley have introduced the California Global Warming solutions Act of 2006. AB 32 would reduce global warming over the next decade by putting teeth into Governor Schwarzenegger's effort to get to the above standards. It would authorize the Cal EPA to achieve the reduction goals by actually regulating refineries, power plants and other major industries and other major polluters and require mandatory reporting of emissions by 2008.

CONTACT YOUR ASSEMBLY AND SENATOR. TELL FRIENDS TOO!



CLEAN AIR BILL QUALIFIES

Over a million submitted signatures have put the Clean Alternative Energy Initiative on the California November ballot. This is nearly double the required number, reflecting voter outrage over pollution, record-breaking company profits and high gas prices.

This initiative will fund a \$4 billion effort to reduce California's dependence on gasoline and diesel fuel by 25% over the next decade by making alternative fuel vehicles and vehicles more widely affordable and accessible to consumers. The tax on oil would fund energy research, generating from \$200 million to \$380 Million in annual revenue and stay in effect until the state collects \$4 billion. Of that sum, \$400 million would be used to offset startup costs at alternative energy ventures.

Campaign updates are available from Noah Austin at noah@yesoncleanenergy.com



CA MEDI-CAL RECIPIENTS NEED UNINTERRUPTED SERVICES

Aimed at weeding out undocumented immigrants using public services, the federal Deficit Reduction Act is intended to prevent persons who do not have either a passport or a birth certificate combined with a photo ID from obtaining Medi-Cal aid.

The program takes effect July 1, 2006.

Ironically, this provision will impact U.S. citizens, particularly those born before WWII when birth certificates were not universal or whose born outside the US to American parents. Also affected: the disabled and children who have no reason to have a photo ID.
Affected: 8 million folks.

The State is also at risk of losing \$15 billion (the federal Medicaid match).

OFFICERS AND STEERING COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Joan B. Lee 332-5980
Secretary/Program: Marge Cumming
Treasurer: Lola Young
Staff Project Coordinator, Medicare Part D Grant, Margie Metzler
Environmental: Dr. Karl Stoffers
Disabled issues: Terry Terry
Historian - OPEN POSITION
Hospitality: Joyce Westergaard
Housing issues: Linda Roberts & Karen Raasch (CIDs)
Labor/wage issues: Nell Ranta
Newsletter Asst. Editor - John Bernier
SS/Medicare Advisor: Peter D'Anna
Transportation: Jim & Doris Sanford
Members at Large - Edy Poole, Pat Naylor, Jean Mellberg, Betty Merle
Computer assistant - Beverly Crosby.
Webmaster staff: Margie Metzler

.....
Gray Panthers Annual Dues are \$30 for individuals and \$35 for families. This includes newsletter, membership in Gray Panthers National and Gray Panthers California.

If new members choose to join in coming months, they may pay the full amount or choose from the following monthly pro-rated schedule for 2006.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Family</u>
January	\$20.00	\$20.50
February	17.50	18.00
March	15.00	15.50
April	12.50	13.00
May	10.00	10.50
June	7.50	8.00
July	5.00	5.50
August	Both \$3.00 + \$30 for 2007	

I WANT TO JOIN GRAY PANTHERS SACRAMENTO!!!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail Address: _____

Membership:

Regular: \$30 or pro-rated amt. \$ _____

Family/35 or pro-rated amt. \$ _____

Newsletter Subscription only \$15 _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

*Note: It is not necessary to pay for the newsletter if you join as a full member! Make any check to Gray Panthers of Sacramento and send to PO Box 19438, Sacramento, CA 95819.

REMEMBER THAT LACK OF FUNDS WILL NOT DETER BELONGING TO OUR ORGANIZATION!!

WANT LOWER PRESCRIPTION PRICES? WRITE NOW!

While the President and Congressional conservatives continue to try to divert attention from the “real issues,” know that Senator Feinstein has asked for our support for **S.2053**, which she is sponsoring with Senators Snowe and Wyden. **S.2053** would reduce the costs of prescription drugs by the negotiating of Medicare prescription prices, so far forbidden by the Medicare Modernization Act. Gray Panthers will write a letter of support, and urge YOU to do so too. We can offer her support when she “does the right thing”!



DO YOU WANT TO HELP OUR ENVIRONMENT?

E-mail YOUR congressman about **H.R. 5359**, an amendment to raise fuel economy standards

to 33 miles per gallon by 2016. This would save American consumers \$79 a year at the gas pump and 2.5 million barrels PER DAY — more than we import from the entire Persian Gulf.

Jury Duty Scam

Please pass this to your friends... It is spreading fast!

Most of us take a summons for jury duty seriously, but enough people skip out on their civic duty, that a new and ominous kind of scam has surfaced. Fall for it and your identify could be stolen, reports CBS.

In this current scam, someone calls pretending to be a court official threateningly says a warrant has been issued for your arrest because you didn't show up for jury duty. The caller claims to be a jury coordinator.

If you protest that you never received a summons for jury duty, the scammer asks you for your Social Security number and date of birth to verify the information and cancel the arrest warrant. Sometimes they even ask for credit card number. **Give out any of this information and bingo! Your identity just got stolen!**

This scam has been reported so far in 11 states. It has been particularly insidious because they use intimidation over the phone to bully people into giving information by pretending they're with the court system. The FBI and the federal court system have issued nationwide alerts on their web sites, warning consumers about the fraud.



Al Gore Speaks About His Movie *An Inconvenient Truth*

The film lays out the latest, up-to-date, most compelling facts about this unprecedented climate crisis in a forceful presentation. It is filled with startling images and dramatic pictures showing clearly what is happening to our Earth and why global warming is now being called a **Planetary Emergency**.

I have tried to tell this story for 30 years. I'm sending you this email now because I feel so passionately that we simply do not have any more time to waste. This crisis is unlike anything we have ever faced. The debate among scientists is over!

According to the experts, the climate crisis could (if unchecked) literally destroy the habitability of the Earth and bring civilization to a halt. This really is not a political issue. It is a moral issue! Here's what the Fox News reviewer wrote about the movie: "Not to be missed. It doesn't matter whether you're a Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative....your mind will be changed in a nanosecond."

Learning about this crisis is the first step toward solving it. Then, we all have to turn knowledge into action and concern into commitment. My wife Tipper and I feel so strongly about the need for action, we are giving 100% of whatever profits we receive from the movie and the accompanying book by the same name, to a bipartisan educational effort.

* * * * *

I cannot stress enough how important it is that you see this movie! Even those who have been "following" Global Warming issues will learn a lot and be greatly moved!! Joan Lee

According to Variety, **An Inconvenient Truth** broke the all-time per-screen record for any movie opening on Memorial Day weekend set by *The Shining*, back in 1980.

**JOIN US at Hart Senior Center July 11
For our ANNUAL POTLUCK!**

**Tuesday, July 11, 12:30 pm
BRING A FRIEND, SOME FOOD, AND HAVE A GOOD TIME!**

REMEMBER: NO GRAY PANTHERS MEETING IN AUGUST!

GRAY PANTHERS OF SACRAMENTO
P.O. BOX 19438, Sacramento, CA 95819

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