

# BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW NEWS



SPRING 2005  
Volume 34  
No.2



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## DEMOCRATIC LEADERS RECRUITING ANTI-ABORTION CANDIDATES!

The cost of printing and postage for our quarterly newsletter is considerable, and is depleting our meager treasury.

We hope you have found BQ NOW NEWS informative and that it has provided you with the opportunity to participate, by contacting your legislators on the issues we highlight.

Please help us by making a donation, so that we may continue to send you this information. Any amount is appreciated. Send your check to address above.

Democratic leaders are actively recruiting anti-abortion candidates and forcing out pro-choice Democrats! **Tell Democratic leaders that moving to the *Right* is the *Wrong* strategy.**

Democratic leaders recently forced winning pro-choice candidate Barbara Hafer out of the 2006 Pennsylvania Senate race against extremist Republican incumbent Rick Santorum. Why? So they could run an anti-abortion Democrat. This is the same losing tactic they used against Santorum in 2000. We must speak out to stop the Democratic Party from becoming "Republican-lite" on women's issues and undermining its own women candidates.

Barbara Hafer is a strong advocate for reproductive rights and was the frontrunner to take on Rick Santorum in the 2006 Pennsylvania Senate. She has just been **forced out of the race by Democratic leaders and consultants** in favor of an anti-abortion candidate they recruited.

Who did top Democrats pick to run against Santorum, one of the leading anti-abortion, anti-women's rights and anti-gay senators? **Top Democrats recruited Robert P. Casey Jr., a staunch abortion opponent.** And who made sure that Hafer would not run? She was pushed out by our **Sen. Charles Schumer of New York**, who, as head of the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee, serves as the top Senate recruiter for the Democrats. Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, who previously supported Hafer, then made the call forcing her out of the race. Political consultants are already lining up with the Casey campaign.

Don't mistake this for a random act—it is a calculated effort by party leaders to build a so-called "bigger tent" at the expense of women's rights. It almost happened in Rhode Island as well, where **Schumer** and national Democratic leaders tried to recruit an anti-abortion candidate to run against a pro-choice candidate in the party's Senate primary and against a pro-choice Republican Senator in the general election. Thanks to the strong and vocal opposition of Rhode Island NOW activists, the anti-choice candidate decided to stay in his safe house seat, and every remaining potential candidate for the Democratic Senate nomination now professes his commitment to reproductive rights.

Call or write **Senator Schumer** and tell him that, **moving to the *Right* is the *Wrong* strategy!** If you won't stand up for women and women's rights - core Democratic values - then you can't expect women's rights supporters to stand up for you.

Senator Charles Schumer, 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510-3203, Telephone: 202-224-6542. Fax: 202-228-3027

## Success: An Internship with NOW

by Rachele Suissa

The first time I discovered NOW, I was sitting in my freshman English class at James Madison High School. My teacher mentioned that it was one of the various organizations that worked on improving conditions for women on both a local and a national level. I decided to do a little background research on NOW, and I discovered that it was founded by a woman named Betty Freidan in 1966. Since then, it has launched numerous rallies, demonstrations, and marches for all kind of issues relating to women. From that moment on, I knew I wanted to become a part of that organization.

Throughout high school, I produced a plethora of papers about issues relating to women—reproductive rights, gay/lesbian marriages, and equal pay for women, to name a few. I found these topics to be very interesting, primarily because they focused on issues that I read about on a day-to-day basis. On several occasions, I did projects and wrote papers relating to women's issues. In the last semester of high school, I put together a project board about the National Organization for Women, highlighting key events from its almost 40-year history, including the recent March for Women's Lives that was held on April 25th of this year in Washington, DC. My teacher loved the project, but more importantly, I felt that I had educated my classmates about an organization that would be crucial to the future of both women's and men's lives.

I am now a freshman at Pace University. One of the requirements of my Introduction to Women's Studies class is a 20-hour service component with an organization or group of our choice. I chose to work with the Brooklyn-Queens Chapter of NOW, because I had developed a great interest in the issues concerning women over the past four years. I got in touch with the President Shirley Ranz. Soon I began my internship with BQ NOW. It was one of the most defining moments of my life. I just began college and already I have an internship with a well-known, prestigious

organization devoted to women just like me. I look forward to working with NOW, hopefully not just for this semester, but for a long, long time. Who knows? Maybe one day I'll become the President. ☺

*Rachele successfully completed her internship, became a member, and has become a part of the activist core.*

### RECYCLING FOR BQ NOW

Brooklyn-Queens NOW is participating in an environmental partnership fundraising program that is designed to help raise money for our organization. Across the country, groups like ours are actively collecting old cell phones, empty inkjet & laser cartridges and other items from within their organizations and throughout their communities. Just like aluminum cans, used cell phones and inkjets have value, a much greater value. For each phone or cartridge collected our organization can earn much needed funding. It's simple, and it's good for the environment as well, since most of the phones and cartridges we collect can be remanufactured.

Since empty cartridges and old cell phones can be found in homes, businesses, hospitals and schools, we would like this to be a community-wide collection effort. You probably have many of these items laying around your home and at your office. If you would like to receive a collection box to set up at your place of business, please notify us and we will have one sent to you.

We greatly appreciate your support in our phone/cartridge collection effort. All we ask is that if you are not already involved in a recycling program like this, that you please save these items and donate them to our organization.

Contact Shirley Ranz at [shranz@earthlink.net](mailto:shranz@earthlink.net) or 718-769-8901 about having your items picked up.



## BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW CHAPTER CALENDAR

Chapter meetings take place the first Monday of the month at 7pm.

Call the numbers listed for exact location and directions



**May 2: Chapter Meeting and Elections.** Sheepshead Bay, call 347-200-4320. The uncontested candidates are: President: Shirley Ranz, Vice-President: Sherry Rogers, Secretary: Barbara Sheren, and Treasurer: Constance Pigozzi.

**June 6: Chapter Meeting.** E.12 St near Ave X, call 718-891-2490

**July 1-3: National Conference** in Nashville, TN. (see [www.now.org](http://www.now.org) for details)

**July 11: Chapter Meeting,** Forest Hills, Queens, (F train) call 718-263-7638

**August 27 or 28: Annual Women's Suffrage Party,** location to be determined.

### In Memoriam: Geraldine Miller

The NOW family lost a feminist firebrand when Geraldine Miller passed away on March 28, 2005, after a battle with cancer. At the age of 85, Miller was still dedicated to and involved in the women's rights movement. She was a familiar sight at NOW conferences, no matter how far from her New York home they took place, and last year she was honored with the President's Award at the National NOW Conference in Las Vegas.

Geraldine Miller was an activist for decades. She founded Bronx NOW in New York, was the first to chair NOW's Women of Color Task Force and served several times as chair of NOW's committee on Eliminating Racism. She presented many workshops for NOW members and leaders on ending racism, developing a process called "race, class and cultural conflict." Miller received a number of awards for her courage and vision, and recently was inducted into Smith College's Women of Color Hall of Fame in honor of her efforts for household workers.

Those efforts took off in 1971 when Miller founded the Household Technicians Union to ensure equal rights for women who work mainly "under the table" as maids, nannies and cooks. Starting when she was a teenager, Miller worked in hotels, restaurants, kitchens and primarily in private homes, and she knew the struggles it took just to get by. The union put pressure on employers to comply with minimum wage standards and Social Security laws. In 1974, Miller worked closely with Rep. Shirley Chisholm to help household workers win the right to be included in the Federal Minimum Wage Act.

Miller adopted as her mantra the phrase "each one, teach one," which is based on an ancient African and African-American concept and was used by Chisholm.

A past president of the National Congress of Neighborhood Women, she ran a workshop for NCNW's Project Open Doors that brought to light similarities and shared concerns of homemakers and household workers, breaking down the barriers of class and race.

Geraldine Miller truly will be missed, but her example of selflessness and determination will live on for many years.

(This was printed from <http://www.now.org/history/miller.html>)



# ACTION ALERTS

Use NOW's Capwiz interactive political page (<http://www.capwiz.com/now/dbq/officials/>) to send messages to your elected officials.



## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) 2005 Reauthorization bill will be introduced by both the Senate and House early this spring. **Please help by asking your senators and representative to co-sponsor the reauthorization.**

VAWA was passed in 1994, reauthorized and enhanced in 2000, and is due to expire this Fall unless it is reauthorized again. Because of VAWA, a broad range of services now exist to provide much-needed aid to women who must cope with the aftermath of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, rape, incest and stalking. Although we have made advances in public attention to this issue and improved services to victims since VAWA's passage a decade ago, much still remains to be done to combat and prevent intimate, family and sexual violence against women.

During these political hard times with budget deficits and program rollbacks, advocates face an uphill battle to win support for legislation that will call for more funds and expand services and attention to this issue. But we cannot abandon nor dilute our determination to make eradicating sexual and domestic violence a fundamental national priority. We must fervently and insistently ask for support for an expanded and enhanced VAWA that continues the integrity of the original bill and diversifies the prevention and program efforts.

**VAWA 2005 Improvements must include:**

- Giving violence survivors reasonable unpaid leave from work to address their situation, including attending court hearings; unemployment coverage if they can't continue working or are released from their jobs; and protection from job discrimination.
- Increasing the options for survivors of domestic violence who need transitional housing.
- Expanding prevention and intervention programs targeted at children and youth, and including "minors" in all programs and services. Additional attention must be paid to underserved communities and individuals.
- Improving the training and education of health care providers to improve medical services for survivors.
- Extending VAWA's outreach to communities near and far to ensure that everyone has access to prevention strategies and to vital protective and recuperative services.

## EC FOR RAPE VICTIMS

**Ask your representative to sponsor H.R. 1214, a bill introduced by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).** This proposal, which has more than 50 sponsors, will require the Department of Justice to include emergency contraception for rape victims in its national protocol for treatment of rape survivors. These first-ever national medical guidelines originally included EC as part of the rape treatment options, but recommendations about EC disappeared in the final version. Rape survivors who seek medical treatment *must* have information about EC and the option to take it as part of their medical treatment.

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**BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW  
LEADERSHIP  
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Vice President: Barbara Sheren 891-2490  
Secretary/Editor: Sherry Rogers 263-7638  
Treasurer: Constance Pigozzi 331-1137  
Membership: Judith Ebert 951-7441

**ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION**

**OUR CORE ISSUES:**

- Reproductive Rights
- Passage of the ERA
- Equal Economic Opportunity
- Stopping Violence against Women
- Ending Discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation

Our activities focus on the political, legislative and educational arenas.

Use NOW's Capwiz interactive political page  
(<http://www.capwiz.com/now/dbq/officials/>) to send  
messages to your elected officials.

visit our web site: [www.brooklynnow.org](http://www.brooklynnow.org)

**BQNOW GROWS BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS**

In less than one year BQNOW has gained 85 new members! Our latest chapter total in February tipped the scales at 497. We fully expect that by the next Newsletter our membership will have reached the 500 mark! We thank all our members—and particularly our leadership—for helping make BQNOW a significant force in our community. It is important for public and private policymakers alike to know when we demonstrate, telephone, write, and otherwise lobby them that we represent approximately 500 feminists in Brooklyn and Queens.

We've made some pretty amazing changes to our website, [www.brooklynnow.org](http://www.brooklynnow.org). Many thanks to **Debra Cagwin** for her dedication and artistry.

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