

# BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW NEWS



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## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Politics dominated our chapter's activities these past few months. Our PAC recommended endorsement of Steve Harrison for Congress (CD13) and Velmanette Montgomery for NYS Senate (SD18). Both were endorsed. BQNOW VP Rachele Suissa and chapter Secretary Sherry Rogers had the pleasant task of reading National's endorsement of Harrison at a Staten Island press conference on August 20. Harrison lost to NYC Councilmember Mike McMahon in the Democratic Primary. Montgomery faced no opposition in the primary.

When McCain named Sarah Palin as his running mate on August 29th, we received calls from media and membership asking for our reaction. On August 30th, at our Women's Equality Day celebration, a CW 11 crew interviewed President Julie Kirshner and VP Rachele Suissa. Their reactions were on target, as always! They stated that the nomination was a ploy to grab at Clinton supporters who were disappointed at the outcome of the Democratic nomination. They pointed to McCain/Palin positions on our major issues and said no one was fooled by this blatant attempt to shove a woman, any woman into the mix. When National NOW endorsed Obama/Biden, rumors of support for Palin were put to rest. Why? See our insert in this issue. On one side you'll see side-by-side comparisons of the two slates and on the other side a comparison of McCain's voting record with Nat'l NOW on specific issues. Make copies and send it on to any undecided voters you know. You can also download it from the online newsletter on the BQNOW website. Here's the link: <http://www.brooklynqueensnow.org/news.html>

In chapter only news, Membership Chair Judith Ebert has passed the torch to Marilyn Rogers. Words are inadequate to express our gratitude to Judith for her many years as chair. Her efforts on behalf of BQNOW membership may have been behind-the-scenes, but her voice and guidance on our board will continue. Speaking of Judith, she was interviewed by (LGBT)

Media Center on what it's like to be an elder LGBT. She spoke on ageism. One of her quotes: "Age is not a four-letter word. Almost, but not quite." She wants younger LGBT people to become more aware that there actually is an active elder LGBT population. Ageism in the LGBT community merely reflects the ageism in the broader mainstream community. Visibility is essential.

On August 30th we refreshed and recharged our feminist batteries with our annual Women's Equality Day celebration. We came, we ate, we bought and WE TALKED. See Rachele Suissa's article in this issue. At that meeting, BQNOW member Yvonne Graham also spoke of her campaign for Brooklyn Borough President in 2009. Anyone wanting to get more involved in this effort should check out Yvonne's website: [www.yvonnejgraham.com](http://www.yvonnejgraham.com). Also at the meeting, Teresa Hommel of [www.wheresthepaper.org](http://www.wheresthepaper.org) told us about showings of an important documentary (that may well be nominated for an Oscar) called "Stealing America, One Vote at a Time." If you didn't see it and have the chance, GO!!

This month, we held a "Get out the vote Coffee Hour", where 10 of our members and friends addressed postcards to AFL-CIO women members urging them to register and vote this year.

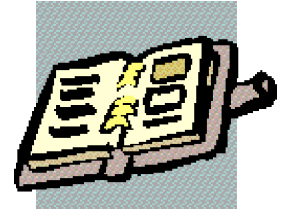
In November, at our state-wide convention (right after Election Day) near Seneca Falls, our own Rachele Suissa will be doing a workshop on Young Feminist's Activities. She and Julie Kirshner will lead another on the Role of Sexism in the Media.

Finally, check out our website! It's been updated with voter registration capability and new action alerts. There's mention of our upcoming vigil with Pro-Choice Network at the Sunset Park Clinic on November 15th.

REMEMBER TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 4TH. Our rights, our Congress, and the Supreme Court are up for grabs!

## BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW CHAPTER CALENDAR-2008

Chapter meetings take place the first Monday of the month at 7pm, unless otherwise noted. Inclement weather may force the rescheduling of a chapter meeting, so be sure to RSVP the number provided or call 718 951-7441. Call the numbers below for exact location and directions.



- Nov 3 **Chapter Meeting** in Jackson Heights. Call 718 457-0703 or 718 263-7638.
- Nov 7-9. **NOW- NYS Convention.** Seneca Falls, NY Celebrate the 160th anniversary of the first Women's Rights Convention.
- Nov 15 Join BQNOW and others to **protest the Church's harassment of clinic patients.**  
Time: 8:15 AM. Location: 43rd St & 3rd Ave, Brooklyn. R train to 45th Street.
- Dec 1 **Chapter Meeting** in Homecrest, Brooklyn. Call 718-891-2490
- Jan 5 **Chapter Meeting** in Forest Hills. Call 718-896-9130
- Feb 2 **Chapter Meeting** in Sheepshead Bay. Call 347-515-1410

## Women's Equality Day 2008: We've Come a Long Way!

By Rachele Suissa

This year, we celebrated Women's Equality Day at the Brooklyn College Women's Center. We had a potluck, a silent auction, and a panel of speakers on a wide array of topics on women's issues.

NOW-NYS President Marcia Pappas joined us, and spoke briefly on some of the issues and campaigns that they are working on. In addition, we heard from BQ NOW member Yvonne Graham, the Deputy Brooklyn Borough President, who spoke on issues affecting women in Brooklyn. Jaime Peters, Program Coordinator of the White House Project, spoke about their efforts to recruit and train young women to run for office on local, state and federal levels. BQ NOW member Irene Van Slyke, gave an interesting presentation on health care issues affecting women and the rise of the role of the nurse-practitioner. Our final speaker, Teresa Hommel revved up the crowd about the election and the need for accurate voting machines in New York State. The panel was very informative and exciting to hear.

Coincidentally, our celebration took place the day after McCain announced his selection for Vice-President-Alaska Governor Sarah Palin. News stations NY1 and CW 11 came to the event to ask our opinions on the selection of Sarah Palin for VP. BQ NOW President Julie Kirshner and I were interviewed by a news reporter for CW 11—our comments were broadcast on the 10:00 news. I was glad that to have the opportunity to speak out about McCain's clear-cut attempt to steal the women's vote. Most women are not fooled by Sarah Palin—once her record is revealed. She is no advocate for women, but rather, as anti-feminist

as one can get on a range of issues affecting women. In short, Sarah Palin is not a good choice for women.

The *best* part of our Women's Equality Day Celebration was seeing so many long time members of Brooklyn-Queens NOW, as well as so many new faces! Women, young and old, came together to celebrate the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment that gave us the right to vote—and indeed, it is something to be proud of! The women's vote is crucial to both candidates, and both have been vying for it. Not only should you vote this November 4th, but get everyone you know to turn out as well! This is one of the most crucial elections of our lives, and women's voices must be heard!

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ON TIME-** within 30 days of expiration. **LATE RENEWAL COSTS THE CHAPTER MONEY.** When you renew late the National office removes you from your Brooklyn-Queens NOW affiliation and we don't receive our portion of your membership dues.

Please note that if you renew on time we can also count you as part of the membership numbers we quote when we lobby politicians. **YOU KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THAT IS.**

## The Real Women's Rights Advocates: A look at the Policies of McCain-Palin Compared to NOW

***Think Palin will support Women's Rights? Think Again! She is just like John McCain on all of our issues...***

### John McCain and Sarah Palin...

vs.

### National Organization for Women...

- ✓ In 2004, **McCain supported the Unborn Victims of Violence Act**, which makes it a criminal offense to harm or kill a fetus while committing a violent crime – essentially deeming the fetus a person in the eyes of the law.
- ✓ McCain voted in favor of legislation to amend the definition of those eligible for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to include the unborn, while **voting against legislation to expand SCHIP's coverage to low-income children** and pregnant women at least six times.
- ✓ In July 2006, **McCain voted for legislation that would fine and/or imprison physicians who perform abortions on out-of-state minors** if there are parental notification requirements in their home state. In October 2007, **he voted for legislation that would cut Health and Human Services grants to organizations that perform abortions.**
- ✓ McCain has **voted to require parental consent for teenagers who need access to contraceptives**, and against an amendment to the Senate's 2006 budget that would have allocated \$100 million for the prevention of teen pregnancy by providing education and contraceptives.
- ✓ He **opposed legislation requiring that abstinence-only programs be medically accurate** and based in science. He **voted to abolish funding for birth control and gynecological care for low-income women**, and **against funding for public education on emergency contraception.**
- ✓ He also **voted against a measure that would require insurance companies to cover prescription contraception**, despite the fact that many currently fund male reproductive pharmaceuticals, such as Viagra.

NOW opposed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, recognizing the severe implications of granting Personhood rights to a fetus.

NOW supported the State Children's Health Insurance Program without concern for the unborn, since so many pregnant women with low-income children were already in danger.

NOW opposed legislation that would punish physicians who perform abortions on out-of-state minors. NOW also fervently opposed the Bush Administration's proposed HHS regulations that would cut funding to organizations that perform abortions.

NOW has consistently opposed parental consent for teenagers in need of access to contraception and has supported federal funding for the prevention of teen pregnancy through education.

NOW has consistently supported giving youth medically accurate sex education and has championed in favor of funding for public education on emergency contraception.

NOW has supported legislation requiring insurance companies to cover prescription contraception-- If they can support Viagra, why not contraception?

## OBAMA vs. MCCAIN: RECORD *on* WOMEN

ISSUE	OBAMA	MCCAIN
<b>Standing Up for a Woman's Right to Choose</b>	<p><b>Has a 100% Pro-Choice Voting Record.</b> Obama has received a voting record of 100% from NARAL Pro-Choice America. On the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of <i>Roe v. Wade</i>, Obama stated that “it’s never been more important to protect a woman’s right to choose.” He also passed a law requiring emergency medical services for sexual assault survivors to include coverage for emergency contraception.</p>	<p><b>Wants to Overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i>.</b> McCain has a long anti-choice record and even bragged about the consistent “zero” score he had received from NARAL Pro-Choice America. He believes that <i>Roe</i> is a flawed decision that must be overturned. McCain voted against requiring insurers to provide the same level of coverage for birth control as they do for other prescription drugs.</p>
<b>Equal Pay for Equal Work</b>	<p><b>Believes Equal Pay For Equal Work is “Fundamental to the American Ideal.”</b> Obama helped pass the Illinois Equal Pay Act, which made it illegal for employers to discriminate on the basis of gender and helped protect 330,000 more Illinois women from pay discrimination. Obama co-sponsored the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which sought to overturn the recent Supreme Court decision making it harder for women to challenge pay discrimination. He believes that equal pay for equal work is “fundamental to the American ideal.”</p>	<p><b>Opposed Legislation that Would Help Women Achieve Pay Equity.</b> McCain opposed the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which sought to overturn a recent Supreme Court decision that made it harder for women to challenge pay discrimination. He voted against a proposal to provide more effective remedies to victims of sex discrimination in the payment of wages. McCain even suggested that women get paid less because they need more education and training.</p>
<b>Protecting Women's Health</b>	<p><b>Passed Laws to Increase Cancer Awareness.</b> Obama passed a law in the Illinois State Senate to require coverage of breast and cervical cancer screenings, helped pass a law ensuring that women are included in state-funded clinical research, and was an original sponsor of legislation that launched a national campaign to increase awareness of gynecological cancers.</p>	<p><b>Voted Against Funding for Women's Health.</b> McCain voted against extending Medicaid coverage to pregnant women and infants up to one year of age with incomes below the Federal poverty line. He also voted against transferring \$214 million from the Defense Department to fund breast cancer research.</p>
<b>Fighting Domestic Violence</b>	<p><b>Committed To Violence Prevention and Protection.</b> Obama cosponsored legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. In Illinois, he introduced and passed the Victims’ Economic Security and Safety Act to help domestic violence victims seek treatment without losing their jobs. He has consistently voted for funding to prevent domestic violence and abuse and has passed numerous laws protecting victims.</p>	<p><b>Voted Against Funding to Fight and Prevent Domestic Violence.</b> McCain repeatedly voted against funding to fight and prevent domestic violence, including a \$9 million increase for the Office of Violence Against Women. McCain even opposed authorizing grants to aid children who have witnessed domestic violence.</p>
<b>Child Care</b>	<p><b>Will Provide Child Care Assistance to 7.5 Million Working Women.</b> Obama will expand the Child and Dependent Care tax credit to 7.5 million more working women, including 277,000 in Pennsylvania and double funding for afterschool programs to serve 1 million more children, including 41,314 in Pennsylvania. In Illinois, he helped to dramatically expand day-care services.</p>	<p><b>Repeatedly Voted Against Increased Funding for Child Care.</b> McCain has repeatedly voted against providing billions in additional funding for child care services. McCain even voted against a proposal to expand tax credits for businesses that provide quality child care centers.</p>
<b>Paid Leave</b>	<p><b>Will Expand Sick Leave for Working Women.</b> Obama will work to guarantee 7 days of paid sick leave for the 22 million working women currently without any.</p>	<p><b>Has No Plan To Expand Paid and Sick Leave.</b> McCain has no plan to expand paid leave and sick leave for working Americans.</p>

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## *Letter from the President,*

The last few months have been very productive for BQ-NOW and NOW in general. National NOW PAC endorsed Barack Obama for President, and we wholeheartedly agree.

Also, Governor Palin was the subject of a lengthy article in Metro NY. The daily newspaper featured an interview with me on BQ-NOW's negative opinions about the Alaska Governor.

Finally, Rachele and I travelled to Bethesda, MD for an exciting NOW National Conference. We attended many workshops which related to the election this year, including Mad at Media Bias? which featured sexism aimed at Senator Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi and even Michelle Obama. Other workshops we enjoyed were Election 2008: What's at Stake for Women? and Women Run, Women Vote, We all Win!

Especially inspiring was the speech by Lilly Ledbetter, wherein she described her years at Goodyear Tire, and her subsequent discovery that she was being paid substantially less than the men working with her. She took her case to the Supreme Court and amazingly lost, making it much harder for women to sue in the cases of unequal pay. It shows us how much we need the right president to pick future Supreme Court justices.

Thanks for reading, and be active with NOW!

*Julie Kirshner*



## ACTION ALERTS



The Safe Harbor Act for Exploited Children (A.5258-c/S.3175-c) has become law. NYS will stop criminalizing commercially sexually exploited youth and instead provide

meaningful services in a nurturing, non-punitive environments.

### **Lift the Ban!**

Ask your rep. to help repeal "Don't Ask Don't Tell"

Only one law in the United States mandates firing someone because of her or his sexual orientation. That law is 10 U.S.C. 654, also known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and it applies to all personnel serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, including active duty, Reserve, and National Guard personnel. All service members deserve respect, regardless of sexual orientation. Under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, more than 11,000 members of the U.S. Armed Forces have been discharged, including those with valuable linguistic skills. The policy undermines the dignity, privacy, and integrity of service members by requiring them to hide or lie about their sexual orientation.

### **Action Needed:**

The Military Readiness Enhancement Act,

(H.R. 1246), originally introduced by Representative Marty Meehan (D-Mass.), now has over 100 co-sponsors in the House! We need you to urge your representative in Congress to support this bill that aims to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and replace it with a policy of nondiscrimination. One's right to serve in the Armed Forces should be based solely on ability and willingness.

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is a clear cut case of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Since 1993, NOW has strongly opposed any compromise that denies anyone the right to equal treatment within the military. The new leadership in Congress appears willing to work to end this discrimination, so NOW and our coalition partners are working to "Lift the ban"!

Use NOW's Capwiz interactive political page (<http://www.capwiz.com/now/dbq/officials/>) to send messages to your elected officials in Washington, DC. To locate your state and city representatives go to NYPIRG: <http://www.cmap.info/webmapping/default.asp>  
Toll free # US Capitol Switchboard: (800) 459-1887

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