

BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW NEWS



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CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Who said that summer is a time to kick back and take it easy???? BQNOW has been moving ahead on several fronts: locally, we're involved in several city council races; nationally we are involved in NOW and Congressional issues; and within our chapter we're reaching out to our membership through events and actions.

The National NOW convention in Indianapolis resulted in new leadership and a re-dedication to the Equal Rights Amendment. BQNOW Leaders Julie Kirshner and Rachele Suissa were there. See their articles on the convention in this issue.

Our PAC reviewed several questionnaires and conducted interviews for candidates in NYC Council elections. We have one more interview to go, and if you come to the Potluck on August 29th, you'll be able to participate. We have details about each race we considered and contact information for each of our endorsed candidates.

In early June, NYS government was held hostage by two NYC-based Democrats[Hiram Monserrate, newly elected from Queens and Pedro Espada, Jr of the Bronx] who aligned themselves with the Republican minority. The Senate had nearly finished determining which legislation would be released from committee for voting when the coup occurred. The two Democrats switched allegiance, giving the Republicans control of the Senate. Crucial legislation like Pay Equity, healthcare funding, school funding, etc. was sidelined so Espada could seize control of the Senate leadership. Then Monserrate switched back to the Democrats, creating a tie. With no Lieutenant Governor, Espada waited until he was promised Senate presidency before he returned to the Democrats. Interesting to note that both Espada and

Monserrate are being reviewed for possible wrongdoing and could, if convicted, lose their Senate seats.

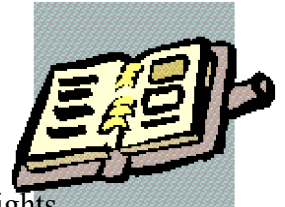
Legislatively, we're moving forward on two issues before the State Legislature re-convenes: Velmanette Montgomery's Anti-Shackling Bill (A03373/SO1290) and proposed Pay Equity Legislation. No bill number is as yet available for pay equity because the governor and NYS legislature can't yet agree on its wording. Previous legislation (S955) was considered "too costly", even though no one bothered to check how much this might actually cost government or private businesses. So far, only Velmanette Montgomery, Diane Savino, and Liz Krueger have taken the lead, working on compromise legislation. Stay tuned.

BQNOW is actively working as part of the Equal Pay Coalition, to make Pay Equity a reality in New York. The Equal Pay Coalition (www.nywa.org) has much to celebrate in terms of accomplishments - we are a stronger, more diverse and more politically viable entity. We have forged essential and valuable relationships in Albany and losing out this year is due to the overall turmoil in the legislature itself. We will use the coming months to gather data, hone our arguments and create collaborations with like-minded groups to make change in NYS and NYC. Please join in this effort!

Finally, we are kicking back a bit. On August 29th we will gather to celebrate Women's Suffrage with an afternoon Potluck at the home of Eileen Pentel. Won't you join us to recharge your feminist batteries with good food, great conversation, music, and sisterhood? Call 718 769-0101 for details and check the Calendar for the RSVP phone number. See you there!

BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW CHAPTER CALENDAR-2009

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 718 769-0101. Call the numbers below for exact location and directions.



- Aug 29 Annual **Woman's Suffrage Day Celebration** Pot-Luck. Jackson Heights.
Sat, 2-6pm Call 718-672-6399 to RSVP, and to coordinate what you'll bring.
- Aug 31 **Chapter Meeting** in Forest Hills. Call 718-263-7638. **NOTE: DATE CHANGE**
- Sept 15 PRIMARY DAY - NYC Primary Races. Check inside for our PAC Endorsements.
- Oct 5 **Chapter Meeting** in Sheepshead Bay. Call 646-228-7570.
- Oct 25 **NOW-NYS Convention** in Westchester. Call 718-769-0101 or check www.nownys.org
- Nov 2 **Chapter Meeting** in Sheepshead Bay. Call 718-951-7441.
- Nov 3 GENERAL ELECTION. VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!
- Dec 7 **Chapter Meeting** in Forest Hills. Call 718-896-9130.

National NOW Election 2009

by Julie Kirshner

With a remarkably close election as its highlight, 2009's National NOW Conference offered everything it advertised. Taking place on the weekend of June 19-21, in Indianapolis, Indiana, the conference had inspiring speeches, informative workshops and controversies galore. AND that election, won by just eight votes.

The *Feminist Leadership NOW* slate, led by Terry O'Neill, squeaked by the *NOW is the Time* slate, led by Latifa Lyles, who was then vice president of membership. For weeks, NOW is the Time appeared to be running unopposed, when Feminist Leadership NOW entered the race.

The two campaigns painted the conference their colors, with nearly every participant resplendent in orange or purple. BQ-NOW's contingent attempted to stay neutral during the conference but literature poured into every hand as the candidates and their workers tried to convince and win over the hundreds of NOW members walking to workshops or plenary sessions.

The candidates impressed with uplifting speeches and it was obvious that the result would be close. But perhaps the allegations from *Feminist Leadership NOW* that National NOW was having financial difficulties put them over the top. They pointed their fingers at the outgoing president Kim Gandy, and her endorsed candidate, Latifa Lyles of *NOW is the Time*. But for whatever reason, the result was that incredibly close vote with the slate of *Feminist Leadership NOW* as the victor. National NOW's new president is longtime feminist Terry O'Neill.

The 2009 National NOW Conference: One Like No Other

By Rachelle J. Suissa

This year, the National Conference was filled with exciting workshops, and an even more exciting election of the National slate. I attended the following workshops: single payer healthcare and its impact on working women, sexism in the media and its negative impact on girls and young women in everyday life, and a political institute featuring women from districts around the country who shared their secrets to running a successful campaign.

The single-payer healthcare workshop featured a presenter who works on Capitol Hill. She had the inside scoop on how the single payer bill is doing in both houses of Congress and what steps need to be taken to get it passed successfully. The workshop on how the media misrepresents girls and women featured a presentation on the images of women in magazines, on billboards, on television, and clothing and accessory shops that cater to young girls. The images of women in magazines and on television haven't changed much. There were a number of objectionable ads, including ones for the most frequent offenders: Calvin Klein, Dolce and Gabbana, and fashion and fragrance designers. Girls as young as 2 were being sold clothes that said "I need a sugar daddy" and "Out for the money." Teenage girls are being told to buy and wear pants that say "juicy", "sexy", and words that most reasonable people would consider inappropriate and demeaning for a 14-year old. The workshops offered an important update on new developments that are taking place in the often overlapping personal and political spheres of women's lives.

BQ NOW PAC ENDORSEMENTS

Candidates from districts in Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island contacted BQNOW PAC for endorsement. Before considering a candidate, we require her/him to complete our PAC Questionnaire. To see our questionnaire, go to our website: www.brooklynqueensnow.org and download a version from our home page. Your council district is identified on your mailing label. Check the 2nd line, CC identifies your district.

After reviewing each questionnaire, we interviewed the following candidates:

Council District 23 (Hollis Hills, Queens Village, Little Neck, Douglaston, Bayside, Bellerose, Floral Park, Glen Oaks, New Hyde park, Hollis, Hollis Park Gardens, Holliswood, Fresh Meadows) - **Mark Weprin**. He currently

serves as a NYS Assemblymember. His votes in the Assembly speak volumes. Contact information for Mark Weprin: www.markweprin.com, office at 73-20 Bell Boulevard Oakland Gardens, phone: 718-468-4208.

Council District 29 (Forest Hills, Rego Park, Kew Gardens; parts of Maspeth, Richmond, Elmhurst) - Michael Cohen, Karen Koslowitz, and Heidi Harrison Chain. All were excellent on our issues. We voted to endorse **Karen Koslowitz**, a proven fighter and previous Council Member. Contact information for Karen Koslowitz: www.karenforcouncil09.com Address: 72-50 Austin Street, 2nd Floor, Room B, Forest Hills NY 11375. Phone: 347-722-6923 Fax: 718-268-7363.

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NOW is the time.
Keep up the good work!

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NYS Senator Velmanette Montgomery

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of Brooklyn-Queens NOW***

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4 issues per year

Member Rate: \$25 per issue, \$90 per year

Non-profit Rate: \$35 per issue, \$135 per year

Business Rate: \$40 per issue, \$145 per year

BQ NOW PAC ENDORSEMENTS

Council District 33 (Brooklyn Heights, Greenpoint; parts of Williamsburg, Park Slope, Boerum Hill) - Ken Diamondstone and Jo Anne Simon. Both were excellent on our issues. We voted to endorse **Jo Anne Simon**, a longtime advocate for disability rights and civil rights. Contact information for JoAnne Simon: www.joanneforcouncil.com Address: 75-B Hoyt Street Brooklyn, NY 11201 Phone: 718-852-8183

In **Council District 49** (North Shore Staten Island), **Debi Rose** is running against Kenneth Mitchell. Mitchell, in his short stint (since February) in the council, has already disappointed on healthcare, voting against a bill to protect women from being harassed during visits to reproductive health clinics. Contact information for Debi Rose: www.votedebirose2009.com Address: 552 Richmond Rd, Staten Island, NY 10304. Phone: 347-855-2968 Email: info@votedebirose2009.com.

In **Council District 51** (South Shore, Staten Island), **Janine Materna** has only Republican incumbent, Vincent Ignizio to face. His allegiances are not to our issues. Materna is excellent on repro rights, education and domestic violence. In her district, it's not easy to be outspoken on women's rights, but she is. Contact information for Janine Materna: www.janinematernaforcitycouncil.com Address: PO Box 90673 Staten Island, NY 10309 Phone: 718 408-1420. Email: janine.maternal@gmail.com

All our endorsed candidates support NOW issues and have, in their interviews and statements, demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of repro

rights, civil rights, economic impact, marital and healthcare issues. We encourage you to get involved in their campaigns. Canvassing, phone-banking, hosting fundraisers, and contributions are most needed. Primary Day is September 15th. VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

NOTE: We are still considering one more race: **Council District 39** (Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Prospect Park). Candidate Josh Skaller is challenging Brad Lander. Only Skaller has reached out to us. Check our website after August 29 for our endorsement.



ACTION ALERT

Anti-Shackling Legislation

Please express your support for NYS Senator Velmanette Montgomery's anti-shackling legislation (S.1290-A/A.3373-A) by calling on Governor David Paterson to sign her bill into law.

The bill allows women to be cuffed by one wrist during transfer if they are deemed to be a risk to themselves or others, or a flight risk, but otherwise forbids any mechanical restraint during transport, when a woman is in labor, "admitted to a hospital, institution or clinic for delivery, or recovering after giving birth."

You may telephone the Governor at 518-474-8390, or send a letter to him at Executive Chamber - State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224.

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NOW**

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**BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW
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Legislative: Shirley Ranz 718-769-8901
Editors: Sherry Rogers/Shilrey Ranz

***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.

National Organization for Women

Brooklyn-Queens Chapter

P.O.Box 350-746

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