

# BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW NEWS



WINTER 2009  
Volume 39  
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## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Happy new year to all !! Over the past few months we've seen our government shift to the left, our city council hold an unexpected vote on term limits, and our chapter move forward and reach out with special events. Our chapter's activists have increased in number and we welcome each new addition! Most recently, the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is a reality and Governor Paterson has announced his appointee for US Senate - Kirsten Gillibrand! While we were hoping for someone more familiar like Carolyn Maloney or Elizabeth Holtzman, we cheer our newest Senator and look forward to working with her to effect positive change. The Ledbetter Act corrects the Roberts Supreme Court decision that gutted the ability of women workers to sue for wage discrimination. The Act passed helps not only women, but all workers who are victims of wage discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability.

This newsletter contains information about 2 important chapter votes: a bylaw change affecting who may serve on the Executive Board and the upcoming election of chapter officers. Please read the information carefully. The bylaw motion to be voted on at our May meeting would extend board membership to past committee chairs for a period of up to 2 years. We are attempting to correct a previous change that allowed only past officers to remain on the board. See the back page for proposed and original bylaw wording.

Every two years we call upon our membership to nominate and elect chapter officers. Nominations are now open for: President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. The duties of each office and the required qualifications are provided on pages 2 & 4.  
*This newsletter is your official notification of the open nominations period.*

On January 22nd, BQNOW co-sponsored Raise Your Voice for Choice with NOW-NYC and NYCLU. This tribute to Roe v Wade 36 years ago presented a chilling picture of what lies ahead for us. Within this newsletter is a letter you should send to your NYS Assembly member and Senator. We must safeguard access to reproductive rights in our state in the event the Supreme Court further limits or overturns Roe v Wade. BQNOW congratulates NOW-NYC president Sonia Ossorio & Greg Campo on their new baby, Olivia.

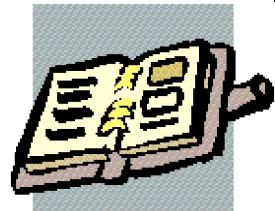
Last year our International Women's Day event, titled "Women Take the Lead" pointed up the need for women to run for office and promote feminist legislation at all levels. Now that women have taken the lead (oh wow, have we ever!), on March 8th we will again acknowledge Women's Day. This year's event, which addresses universal single payer healthcare and state legislative priorities will be held in Brooklyn Heights. Along with such serious matters, we also have a featured musician. See inside for details.

This fall we elect our city council members and city-wide offices: Mayor, Comptroller, Public Advocate. There is the possibility for change or keeping with the current office holders. We'll be interviewing candidates as the primary date approaches. If you'd like to be part of the process, contact our L&P coordinator, Shirley at [shranz@optonline.net](mailto:shranz@optonline.net). We're reviewing our PAC questionnaire and reaching out to candidates.

As our chapter reaches out and moves forward, our finances have become strained. We're looking for ways to raise money to host special events, do more mailings as needed, and develop programs to bring young women into the movement and into our chapter. We're hoping you, our members, will help us with our fundraising. If you have fundraising ideas, know how to write grant proposals, or want to donate funds to the chapter, email [bklynqnsnow@yahoo.com](mailto:bklynqnsnow@yahoo.com) or call 718 951-7441 and leave your name, contact info and a good time to reach you.

Come join us on March 8th! 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 718 951-7441. Call the numbers below for exact location and directions.

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| Mar 3 | <b>Chapter Meeting</b> in Sheepshead Bay. Call 718-769-8901.                                    |
| Mar 8 | <b>International Women's Day</b> celebration, 2:30pm, 43 Monroe Pl., see details on page5.      |
| Apr 1 | <b>Nominations</b> for Chapter Officers due. See below.   |
| Apr 6 | <b>Chapter Meeting</b> in Howard Beach, Queens. Call 718-843-7975.                              |
| May 4 | <b>Chapter Meeting</b> in Midwood, Brooklyn. Vote on <b>bylaw amendment</b> . Call 718-951-7441 |
| Jun 1 | <b>Chapter Meeting</b> in Sheepshead Bay. Election of Officers. Call 718-769-8901.              |

### BQ NOW ACTIVIST-JUDITH EBERT

For more years than can be counted Judith Ebert labored as Membership Chair. Her meticulousness to detail and persistence in encouraging our members to renew in a timely manner was admirable. She responded to inquiries, sent out membership kits and fulfilled a myriad of other tasks. Recently she retired from that position and passed the hat to our current chair-Marilyn Rogers. Judith has also chaired the Lesbian Rights committee. Fortunately for us, she will continue to be a presence in the organization.



On October 27, 2008 we honored this dedicated activist at Limon restaurant in Sheepshead Bay.

### INTERNSHIP POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Brooklyn-Queens NOW is seeking two college interns for the development of our social networking sites through MySpace and Facebook. Interns should have an interest in the historical and political issues affecting women and have good technological skills. The intern will monitor the page on both sites for messages received and keep it updated, and will respond to inquiries in a timely fashion. Most importantly, (s)he will keep the chapter informed of those who are interested in becoming members and participating in upcoming events. The intern will be required to attend and give a report of online happenings each month at the chapter meeting. Internships are unpaid, but are a valuable experience if you are seeking a career in the political/nonprofit sphere. All interns must commit to working at least 10 hours per week online, and will be asked to submit a timesheet at the end of the week detailing the hours they worked and what they did during that time. If interested, please contact Rachelle at [Rachellesuis@gmail.com](mailto:Rachellesuis@gmail.com). A resume and cover letter are required for this internship opportunity.

### Nomination of Chapter Officers

Nominations are open for the following offices: President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary.

To nominate yourself or someone else, you must MAIL (Yes, that's with an envelope and a stamp!) the nominee's name and desired office to: BQNOW Chapter Secretary, c/o Sherry Rogers 111-23 76th Road Apt. D-4 Forest Hills, NY 11375.

The nomination must be postmarked by no later than April 1st. We will mail information about each nominee and her/his statement, if available, no fewer than 30 days later. Qualifications for office are: Member of Chapter for one year, has attended at least 50% of all chapter meetings held in the preceeding year and actively involved within the work of the Chapter. Election of Chapter officers will take place at the June 1st chapter meeting.



## ACTION ALERTS

### Urge Obama to Establish Women's Office at Cabinet-Level

Imagine an **Office on Women** in the Obama-Biden administration -- not just any old office, but one at the Cabinet level, putting women "at the table" in a very tangible way. We can make it happen! Here's a sample letter you can use :

Dear President Obama,

I am writing to you today as a dedicated supporter of women's rights. Because virtually every decision your administration will make will have an impact on women, I urge you to establish a Cabinet-level Office on Women.

This Office on Women should seek new ways to foster the full potential of tens of millions of women and girls of all races and from all walks of life -- through policies, budgeting, inter-agency coordination and special initiatives.

Because women, especially women of color, are differently affected by so many laws and policies -- from health care to the economy -- it is critical that women be taken into account as your administration makes key decisions. Women need an advocate at the policy-making table whose specific responsibility is considering and weighing in on the possible impact of these decisions on women's opportunities for advancement. A Cabinet-level office is the most effective way to accomplish this goal.

This office should address not only the status of women, but also the many inequities that women face in our society, our nation, and our world. The director should hold cabinet rank and report directly to the president. Establishing this office would be another historic first for your administration and a giant leap toward equality.

The women of the United States and the world are counting on your leadership to reverse the damage of the last eight years and move women closer to full equality.

### PASS THE NYS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ACT

We have no guarantees in New York state that our reproductive choices will remain available if the court decides to restrict *Roe v Wade* further or overturn it altogether. There is a very good chance that such actions are in the wings, waiting to be brought before the current court. Send the letter below to your NYS Senator **and** Assemblymember. Be sure to sign your name. To find out who represents you and their contact information, go to:

<http://capwiz.com/lwv/state/main/?lvl=L&azip=14215&state=NY&view=myofficials>

Dear [Assemblymember / Senator] ,

As a New Yorker and your constituent, I am proud that our state has historically been a beacon and leader in reproductive health. I would like New York to uphold this hard-earned reputation. I urge you to demonstrate your support for women's health and reproductive choice by supporting the **Reproductive Health Act**.

The Supreme Court's 2007 decision in *Gonzales v. Carhart* - permitting a ban on an abortion procedure without any exception to protect a woman's health - is a strong blow to women's reproductive rights. Despite a new pro-choice administration, the Supreme Court's actions have made it clear that *Roe v. Wade* is at risk. That is why New York needs to make sure our own laws are updated to protect the fundamental right of women to make their own private healthcare decisions.

The **Reproductive Health Act** would ensure that New York remains a leader for choice, by codifying the protections of *Roe v. Wade* into New York State law. We must act NOW to strengthen the foundation for reproductive freedom in New York State, update our legal code to affirm choice, and ensure that women's health remains paramount in reproductive healthcare. This is the type of state that I want to live in.

Sincerely,  
[your name and address]

## ADVERTISING

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718-625-3398    [ffinkel@aol.com](mailto:ffinkel@aol.com)    FAX;  
718-625-2785

NOW is the time.  
Keep up the good work!

**Councilman Lew Fidler**

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1414 CORTELYOU ROAD  
BROOKLYN, NY 11226  
718 940.0641

### ARTICLE VIII - Elected Officers

**A. The following are the elected officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary.**

**1 & 2. President and Vice-President** are the most responsible positions in the Chapter. Their duties include but are not limited to:

- acting as official spokespersons for the Chapter
- being knowledgeable and currently informed about National, State, and Chapter policies, goals and procedures
- helping to develop Chapter programs and goals.
- focusing the Chapter on its overall goals and purposes;
- preparing an annual report of the chapter's actions and events
- delegating tasks
- acting as resource persons
- preparing agenda and chairing meetings (chairing may be delegated to give others this experience)

**3. Treasurer:** Keeps Chapter accounts and prepares Chapter budget after consulting the Executive Board. Prepares financial section of annual reports to National. Is responsible for processing dues payments with the Membership Chair. Provides a report at each Chapter meeting.

**4. Secretary:** Circulates a sign-in sheet at all Chapter meetings. Takes minutes at Chapter/General meetings and at meetings of the Executive Board, and when necessary. Minutes should be simple, consisting of brief descriptions of decisions made. Minutes should be reported to the regular meeting or summarized in the Newsletter. Keeps official record of the Chapter including copies of letters sent in the name of the Chapter. Prepares an annual report of the Chapter's actions and events.



**NYS Senator  
Velmanette Montgomery**  
*Chairperson, NYS Senate Committee  
on Children and Families*

30 Third Avenue, Room 1100 • Brooklyn, NY 11217 • Tel: (718) 643-6140  
711 Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12247 • Tel: (518) 455-3451  
[www.nyssenate18.com](http://www.nyssenate18.com) • [montgom@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:montgom@senate.state.ny.us)

***Champion of Women's Rights, Supporter  
of Brooklyn-Queens NOW***

## *Letter from the President*

I'm sure this newsletter finds you in good spirits because of the inauguration of President Barack Obama. We at NOW celebrate the great day and look forward to a President who will be on our side on most issues. For instance, he just repealed the global gag rule. We will keep you up-to-date on his accomplishments.

We sent two members to the NOW State Convention this year. Your Vice President, Rachelle Suissa and I were delighted to be running a workshop on *Misogyny and the Media*. We examined the treatment of both Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin. Rachelle also was part of a workshop on Young Feminism. Both workshops took place at the same time, a little glitch in the proceedings, but Rachelle was a trooper, going from one to the other and giving a good presentation at both.

The Convention took place at historic Seneca Falls, and we were pleased to hear Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney at the First Presbyterian Church. We also had the chance to visit the Women's Hall of Fame. If you haven't had the opportunity to see this area, you may want to go to celebrate women's history.

Until next time,  
Be active in NOW!

*Julie Kirshner*, President BQ-NOW

*Brooklyn-Queens NOW invites you to celebrate*

## **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**Sunday, March 8, 2009, 2:30pm at  
The First Unitarian Church, 48 Monroe Place, Brooklyn Heights\***

**SPEAKERS:**    State Senator Velmanette Montgomery  
                         Dr. Nancy Goldner-specialist in women's health issues  
                         State Senator Diane J. Savino  
                         and

*Multifaceted Musical Performer:*  
**Marie Mularczyk-O'Connell**

\*Subway: 2,3,4,5 to Borough Hall or M,R to Court St. Admission free.

## BQ NOW LEADERSHIP CONTACT NUMBERS

President: Julie Kirshner 718-769-9607  
Vice President: Rachelle Suissa 347-515-1410  
Secretary: Sherry Rogers 718-263-7638

Treasurer: Barbara Sheren 718-891-2490  
Membership: Marilyn Rogers 718-457-0703  
Editor: Shirley Ranz 718-769-8901

To locate and send messages to your elected officials go to:  
<http://capwiz.com/lwv/state/main/?lvl=L&azip=14215&state=NY&view=myofficials>

## **BYLAW AMENDMENT: EXISTING AND PROPOSED**

Existing bylaw:

### **ARTICLE VI - Executive Board**

1 - The Board shall be made up of the elected chapter officers and Committee Chairs. Past officers in good standing have the option of remaining on the Board for a period of two years following their resignation. Such officers will not be counted in quorum requirements.

Proposed bylaw (change in underlined italics):

The following motion was submitted for a vote at the chapter meeting on January 15th , 2009:

**MOTION:** To change existing BQNOW bylaw ARTICLE VI - Executive Board Section 1 to read:

1 - The Board shall be made up of the elected chapter officers and Committee Chairs. Past officers and committee chairs in good standing have the option of remaining on the Board for a period of two years following their resignation. Such officers will not be counted in quorum requirements.

We will vote on this bylaw amendment at the May 4th chapter meeting. The amendment is approved if receives a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present at the meeting.

National Organization for Women  
Brooklyn-Queens Chapter  
P.O.Box 350-746  
Brooklyn, NY 11235

Address Service Requested