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Fall 9-1-1999

## Maine NOW Times (Fall 1999)

National Organization for Women - Maine Chapter Staff

*National Organization for Women - Maine Chapter*

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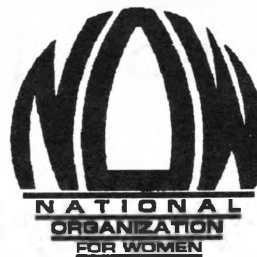
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# Maine NOW Times

## AUTUMN 1999

MAINE NOW, PO Box 4012, Portland, ME 04101, 797-8508



## Northeast Women of Color and Allies Summit "Awesome"

by Ruth Osborne

Celebrating Our Sisterhood! Northeast Region Women of Color and Allies Summit was held from June 5-6 at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany, NY. More than 150 women and men from diverse back-

grounds attended the summit. There was something for everyone in a dozen workshops and lunchtime caucuses that often challenged what we have learned about each other, and provided a space to explore our current concerns and future strategies.

We began with Renée Berry Huffman facilitating a revised



Miss Geraldine Miller, President of the Bronx, NY NOW

"Race, Class, Cultural Conflict" module that included Miss Geraldine Miller's original "Commonalities" piece, and Renée's "Trust and Acceptance" pilot piece followed by everyone's reciting her words in the "Moving Forward Pledge," "...to trust and respect... to work effectively together... and to be the best allies we can be..." The module, which was unveiled at the summit, was a way for women of color who have experienced racist adversities all their lives to share the things that they're proud of, in a safe environment. White women got to learn what it means to be an effective and supportive ally to women of color.

During the weekend, Miss Geraldine Miller, Chapter President of the Bronx, NY NOW and former national board member, was acknowledged for her contributions and accomplishments. She received a plaque that was a combination of works by Mainers Ruth Osborne (art), Renée Berry-Huffman (words), Evangeline Berry (beautiful choice of materials, deep wood and black coated brass), and produced by Sportline Trophy. National NOW was so impressed that Miss Miller has been photographed with the plaque for a future NOW print ad.

The opening ceremony also featured Maine talent with Cynthia Phinney and Renée Berry-Huffman singing, Mariah Carey's "Hero." "It was just beautiful," said Geraldine Miller. "Shero" awards were also presented to outstanding women of color working for justice. Evangeline Berry, Maine NOW Affirmative Action Coordinator, was one of the recipients, joined by two generations on stage, daughter Renée, and granddaughter Domonique.

Workshops from Maine included Lois Galgay Reckitt's "Women as Allies: A Prejudice Reduction Workshop," and June Thornton-Marsh and Ruth Osborne's "Powerful, Loud, and Bold: Three Asian-American Perspectives." Thanks to the activists from Maine who made the very long trek to Albany to support this conference.

The speakers were inspiring, and included Marcia Ann Gillespie, Editor in Chief of Ms Magazine; Mandy Carter of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum; Marian Kramer of the National Welfare Rights Union; Reverend Cheng Imm Tan of the Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence (Massachusetts) and other organizations; and Elizabeth Toledo, NOW Vice President - Action.

Besides the usual events, a successful silent auction was held, and the dance was well attended. We listened. We told our stories. Some of us felt joy, pain, confusion, connection, or all of these and more. Together with the message about how difficult it is to work together across many of the barriers created around race and other differences was the message of hope in evidence everywhere at the conference. Youth Expressions Theatre of Girls Incorporated presented the play, "Sisters Unite! You are part of the play!" For some, the Summit became Act One, where we realized that we could rewrite our lives with the richness of a full cast of characters. "Wonderful" and "Awesome" were some of the comments following the Summit. "I can't wait to do it again," wrote Renée.

To all NOW activists who wish to continue to build on the momentum of WOCAS, please consider joining the planning committee for the 2000 Regional Conference. Another way to support this endeavor is to purchase a "Celebrating Our Sisterhood" T-shirt and mouse pad. Please contact ME NOW to order yours at 772-3368.

# Vote No on Question #1

by Deanna Partridge

On November 2, Mainers will vote on Question 1, an act to ban so-called "partial-birth abortion." This proposed new law was placed on the ballot through a signature campaign by Maine's Christian Civic League, Christian Coalition and a coalition of other groups dedicated to banning safe, legal abortion. There is no medical procedure known as "partial-birth abortion," and this so-called ban is far more than it appears to be. **Maine NOW strongly opposes Question 1.**

Maine NOW, and other pro-choice organizations and coalition partners including Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, the Family Planning Association, the League of Women Voters and the Maine College of Obstetricians/Gynecologists, are working together to inform Mainers about Question 1. We're asking you and everyone else you know who can vote to read the ballot measure for yourself: *"Do you want to ban a specific abortion procedure, to be defined in law, except in cases where the life of the mother is in danger?"*

The ban's proponents want you to think Question 1 is about late-term abortion. Don't be fooled. Question 1 has nothing to do with late term abortions. The truth is conspicuously hidden and yet obvious — just look at the ballot question language and see for yourself. You won't find the words "late term" or any other indication of gestation, trimester or point in pregnancy that this law is supposed to cover. Not only is this critical information missing in the ballot question, it is also absent from the proposed law. Further, the law makes up a definition for the made-up phrase "partial-birth abortion." There is no specific medically-known procedure defined in this proposed law. In fact, Maine physicians have said the language is so open-ended that it is unclear what medical procedures would be prohibited.

There's a reason for this confusion. Despite the fact that the same or similar language has been struck down in 18 states across the nation, the backers of Question 1 have chosen to be intentionally vague. Their referendum could ban almost all abortions in Maine because that's their agenda. Maine already has a tough law that makes it illegal to perform late abortions unless the life or health of the woman is endangered.

Anti-choice folks don't want you to know that your doctor could be subjected to criminal prosecution; that your husband and parents could sue your doctor for unlimited emotional pain and suffering in civil suits; that your doctor might not be able to consider your health as a factor in your treatment; that your private medical records could be open to inspection by police, lawyers, prosecutors and government bureaucrats under their new law.

The NO on 1 Coalition is organizing phone banks, housemeetings and other activities throughout Maine to ensure that Mainers are informed about what this referendum is, what it isn't and what it could do to women's lives and health if it becomes law.

The Pro-Choice side needs your help and we need it now. Host a housemeeting or a houseparty, write a check, call your friends, help out at a phonebank site, put a bumper sticker on your car, put a lawn sign in front of your house, sign our signature ad and call or Email the campaign coordinator nearest you.

**Kennebec, Waldo, Knox and Somerset counties:** Liz Keith, [elizkeith@aol.com](mailto:elizkeith@aol.com) or 621-2551  
**Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock, Washington and Aroostook counties:** Renee LeDuc or Jenny Lyons, [renee\\_leduc@hotmail.com](mailto:renee_leduc@hotmail.com) or 973-3653 and [jenny\\_lyons@umit.maine.edu](mailto:jenny_lyons@umit.maine.edu) or 581-1508 respectively

**York and Oxford counties:** O. B. O'Brien at 283-3044

**Androscoggin and Franklin counties:** Deb Simpson at 777-1379

**Cumberland, Lincoln and Sagadahoc counties:** Sarah Standiford, [sarahs@ppnne.org](mailto:sarahs@ppnne.org) or 874-1100 ext. 333 or Sarah Kydd at 842-6461

**NO on 1 Coalition headquarters** P.O. Box 10899, Portland, ME 04104, phone: 842-6461 or [mechoice99@aol.com](mailto:mechoice99@aol.com)

Maine NOW PAC urges you to defeat this proposed ban on abortions and to vote to protect the health and privacy of Maine women. Remember, there is only one pro-choice vote on November 2, VOTE NO on Question 1.

**Join us in the fight to KEEP ABORTION SAFE AND LEGAL NOW!**

## GROW Makes Global Connections

"Making the Connections," the third GrassRoots Organizers Workshops (GROW) Conference will be held October 22, 23, and 24th at Tanglewood Learning Center in Lincolnville, Me.

It is through "Making the Connections," learning the skill of drawing the line from our daily lives through the political process, to the policies, and to the source that we will discover strategies for change. Workshops include "Lessons from the Third World"; "Communication: Agent of Change"; "Building Mobilization Networks" (tentative); "Direct Action: Why and How," and "Conscious Living."

For more information, write or call: G.R.O.W., c/o Nancy Galland, RR1 Box 1013, Stockton Springs, Me. 04981; Tel. 567-4075; e-mail: [gallander@acadia.net](mailto:gallander@acadia.net)

## Maine Closes in on Clean Elections

In just a few short months, Maine's bold experiment in campaign reform will truly begin. For the first time, candidates for State House and Senate will be able to run campaigns that are free of special interest money and influence. That's good news for both candidates and the people they serve.

NOW members know, without a doubt, what an enormous impact government decisions have on our world. Those we elect determine how women and girls fare in schools, the workplace, the health care system and in our economy.

Clean Elections gives all of us a way to translate our values into meaningful political action. It is a system that is powered by people — not big money — and that means we all need to participate.

- Encourage peace activists you know to run for office. Urge all candidates to use the Clean Election system.
- Help candidates in your district qualify by giving them a "Qualifying contribution" — a check for \$5 made out to the Clean Election Fund.
- Volunteer to collect "Qualifying contributions" from your neighbors and friends.
- Support candidates by hosting a coffee, putting up signs, and distributing literature.
- Consider running for office yourself

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) will host several training sessions around the state this fall.

<b>AUGUSTA</b>	<b>BANGOR</b>
Thursday, September 30, 6 - 8 p.m.	Wednesday, October 6, 6 - 8 p.m.
Lithgow Public Library, downstairs conference room Winthrop Street	Bangor Public Library, Lecture Hall 145 Harlow Street

For more information, or to request a copy of the brochure "Being a Clean Election Candidate is as Easy as 1-2-3!" contact MCCE at 780-8657 or mcl97@aol.com.

## Stop the Hate

STOP THE HATE: Interfaith Vigils Against Hate Violence' will take place simultaneously throughout the United States. The Maine Civil Rights March and Rally Committee invites you to join in this special night of healing and action, 7 p.m., Oct. 7, at the Hammond Street Congregational Church, Bangor. For more information or to volunteer assistance, please contact Ron Herson at 941-0969 or 990-5699.

## Week Without Violence '99

The YWCA of Greater Portland is presenting the fifth annual Week Without Violence, October 17-23, 1999. Each day will focus on a separate form of violence and its eradication. There will be speakers, workshops, performances, films and special activities. This is a community education and enrichment event. Among the highlights:

- The Silent Witness Project
- The Clothesline Project: USM Women's Center
- A Festival of Peace for Families: Peace Pole dedication, Veronica's Sacred Theater production, painting of Peace Rocks
- Men make new Silent Witness stand ups: MeCA (sadly, we need 13 more to represent the women who have died due to violent acts in the last year and a half)
- Student Speakout and march through Portland: focusing on teens and their thoughts on violence
- Parenting workshop: Pam Leo

The YWCA is seeking volunteers to help with all the events. If you are able to give of your time between October 17 and October 23, please call Jen Bergeron at the YWCA, 874-1130 ext. 3035. An hour or two would truly help.

## National NOW Sending Field Organizers to Maine

In working to defeat the "so-called" Partial Birth Abortion Ban Referendum, National NOW is sending one, possibly two Field Organizers to Maine.

"You are our highest priority," said Vice President of Action, Elizabeth Toledo.

The Field Organizers are expected to arrive by the beginning of next month. The women will be focusing on outreach at the campuses, assisting with phone banking and increasing our membership.

Said Assistant NOW State Coordinator, Cynthia Phinney, "We are extremely pleased to be getting this involvement to help young women in Maine get involved with defeating the referendum and pushing back this deceptive effort to erode reproductive choices. And this should provide some excellent volunteer opportunities for members who want to be involved, as well."

If you want to volunteer, please feel free to leave a message for Maine NOW at 207-797-8508.

10/2/99: ACT—Active Community Training IV, sponsored by the Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine. Keynote speaker: Frances Moore Lappe, author of *Diet for a Small Planet*. Memorial Union, UM, Orono, noon-5 pm. 942-9343.

# SIGN THIS AD TO FIGHT PARTIAL BIRTH ABORTION\* BAN

Maine NOW members are very concerned about the upcoming referendum to ban an emergency abortion procedure. We will be working in several ways to defeat this referendum. This signature ad is one of those ways. We would like to collect enough signatures and money to be able to place this ad in at least 2 major papers in the State. A quarter page ad in the larger papers costs about \$2000.00.

You can help by filling out this form and making copies to give to friends, coworkers, and family members. We are asking for a donation of \$10.00 with your signature to help us pay for the ad. A sliding fee scale is available. (Your name will be included with or without a donation unless you ask us not to include it).

We the undersigned believe that the "partial-birth abortion" ban is an extreme and dangerous measure. It does not make exceptions for serious harm to a woman's health and is clearly designed to eliminate a woman's right to choose. WHY ELSE WOULD WE NEED SUCH A BAN? We already have a law which bans late-term abortion except to protect the health or life of the woman. The proposed ban's vague language and criminal penalty could affect a doctor's medical decision and seriously compromise a woman's health.

In other states when laws similar to this one have been brought before the state courts, they have been struck down because they are unconstitutionally vague. As one Illinois judge said of a ban considered in his state, "...the statute, as written, has the potential effect of banning the most common and safest abortion procedures."

\*so-called

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 †Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I do not want my name used in ad.

Checks are payable to: Maine NOW PAC  
 Send form and check to Joanne Dauphinee,  
 87 Sunset Strip, Brewer, ME 04412.

†No addresses or phone numbers will appear in this ad.



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## NOW President Patricia Ireland Coming to Maine

NOW President Patricia Ireland is coming to Maine on October 21 to speak against the so-called Partial Birth Abortion Referendum. She will encourage women to stand up and be heard with their votes. Patricia will speak at the University of Maine at Orono, during the Marxist Socialist Lunch Series discussion at 12:30 p.m., have dinner with NOW members and speak again at 7 pm.. Oct.

21 is National Young Women's Day of Action.

"We are truly honored to have Patricia come to our state and support us in this way," said Maine State NOW Coordinator, Renée Berry-Huffman.

For more information regarding Patricia's visit, contact Maizie Hough at 207-581-1228. The visit is co-sponsored by the Student Women's Association, Peace Studies and Maine NOW.



Renée Berry-Huffman I. and Patricia Ireland