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Maine NOW Times (Fall 2007)

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National Organization for Women - Maine Chapter

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Maine NOW Times

Fall 2007

NOW Performs *Freedom Trash Can* Action at Common Ground Fair!

September 21, 22 & 23 in Unity, Maine, means Common Ground Fair! On **Friday at 4:00 p.m.** Maine NOW was in the Speakers' Tent performing the *Freedom Trash Can* action. This action has been seen at events such as the HOPE Festival and Women's Equality Day celebrations, and now it has been at Common Ground!

*Freedom Trash Can?! Depending on your age, grab your feminist history books, or try to recall a 1968 Miss America Pageant. No, not the pageant, the protest! Thanks to both the action & the misreporting (no bras were actually burned), **Crazy Bra-Burning Feminists** burst on the world stage at a whole new level. This early feminist focus on "looksism" was right on the money! The exploitation of women-as-object resonated with women around the world, and the struggle continues against corporate as we take action in the 21st century.*

The 1968 feminist protesters set up a big trash can and threw in articles and symbols of women's oppression! In went girdles, curlers, false eyelashes, wigs. Among the protesters was a young Robin Morgan who swung a bra high in the air and, to great cheering, tossed it in the Can.

Maine NOW also had our award-worthy booth in the Social & Political Action tent!

If you saw us at the fair, we hope you enjoyed the presentation and our booth. If not, mark your calendars now to make it to the fair in 2008!

National NOW PAC Urges Members to "Make History with Hillary"

In March, Women's History Month, the National Organization for Women's Political Action Committee (NOW PAC), announced its endorsement of New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton for President of the United States.

"At this time in our history, this country needs strong, experienced and principled leadership to restore faith in our government and repair its credibility at home and abroad, and to end the destructive policies that have eroded our civil liberties and increased injustice and inequality in our society. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton is just such a leader. She has a long history of support for women's empowerment, and her public record is a testimony to her leadership on issues important to women in the U.S. and around the globe. She has eloquently articulated the need for full economic, political and social equality for women in every institution of society, taking action throughout her career — as a lawyer, community leader, First Lady, Senator and candidate for the presidency — to advance the civil and human rights of women and girls," said National NOW President Kim Gandy at the official announcement on March 28.

"I know *I'm* ready for a president who can turn the country around, and point us in the direction of equality, justice and opportunity for all. For 30 years, NOW PAC has worked tirelessly to help elect feminist candidates to federal office and increase the representation of women in our government. Through "*Make*

Continued: See *Make History With Hillary*, Page 2, Column 1

History With Hillary," NOW PAC will provide training, tools and resources to our hundreds of thousands of supporters, so that they will be informed and equipped to work as volunteers at the grassroots level to elect feminist candidates and make our dream of a woman president a reality...Our members will conduct voter registration drives, make phone calls and go door to door to encourage women to vote as if their future depended on it, because it does," Gandy concluded.

For more information on why NOW PAC chose to endorse Hillary, their web page has links to press releases, blogs, and biographical info, as well as quick summaries of her positions on saving the courts; preserving birth control, abortion rights, and reproductive justice; advancing economic justice; promoting civil rights and ending racism; advancing health care for all; ending discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity; stopping violence against women; and ending the war in Iraq.

You can also register to vote, donate to the campaign, join NOW, and sign-up to volunteer right from the site while you're there. Check it out at: <http://www.nowpacs.org/2008/hillary/>

More than catchy campaign slogans, "I'm Ready" and "You've got the Vote. Use It" are great reminders of the 72-year struggle of suffragists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, the legacy of political pioneers like Shirley Chisholm, and how much work still has yet to be done.

It has been estimated that 5 million single women who were registered to vote did not vote 2004, and 15 million single women are not registered. Just imagine the impact 20 million more inspired and active women could have on the election – and NOW's continued efforts to secure recognition of women's equality!

If you're ready...to vote...to volunteer...to tell your friends...If you're ready for a woman President...check out the National NOW PAC site!

Jo's Opinion on Term Limits

By JoAnne Dauphinee

So, I've been saving books & articles on term limits for ages now. Thought I might write a brilliant analysis one of these days. It will tell you more than I'd like about my mind, and my house, that I have misplaced the entire pile! I have looked high & low. Probably should've term-limited many of my own boxes & piles-o-stuff years ago!

Meanwhile, the rest of the world has moved on, and Maine will put term limits on the November 2007 Ballot! Specifically, Question 5: Do you favor extending term limits for Legislators from 4 to 6 terms?

Yes. My first clue that term limits might be at least partly counterproductive was when, after years of pulling, pushing, & cajoling women into the Maine Legislature, many who got there, liked it there, & headed for or attained leadership there, got term-limited out. The persuasive examples are in the missing pile. Somewhat related, the reason for the increase in women in the 123rd Maine Legislature, was the return of deliberate recruitment of women candidates, known in some feminist circles as affirmative action (shhhh).

My next best clue was an article written for CAWP – Center for American Women and Politics – I think by Susan Carroll, one of their more brilliant analysts in my opinion. She reviewed the history of all the States with any kind of term limits and draws some preliminary conclusions. It looks like term limits may be hurting women – at least, numbers of women or percentage of women – in State Legislatures. Hmmmm.

Maine Background: In 1993, Maine voters enacted term limits under which no member of the Legislature could serve for more than 4 consecutive terms (8 years). This law took effect for the 1996 elections, when 26 House members & 4 Senators were term-limited out. A majority of both parties supported sending the issue back to the voters in 2007, to at least modify it from 4 to 6 terms, though many outright oppose any term limits. Most are not concerned about women, of course. They are worried

about the transfer of power & institutional memory to the Executive Branch, Lobbyists, and staff. These are worries I also share. Often Legislative Committees have Legislators who, while dedicated to the task, are handicapped by lack of knowledge about prior bills and laws and/or players or stakeholders and/or Legislative procedures.

Extending term limits would not effect those term-limited out this session, such as longtime opponent of term limits, Senate President Beth Edmonds. Edmonds argues that good democracy requires balance between the branches of government, and that term limits have shifted that balance to the Executive Branch.

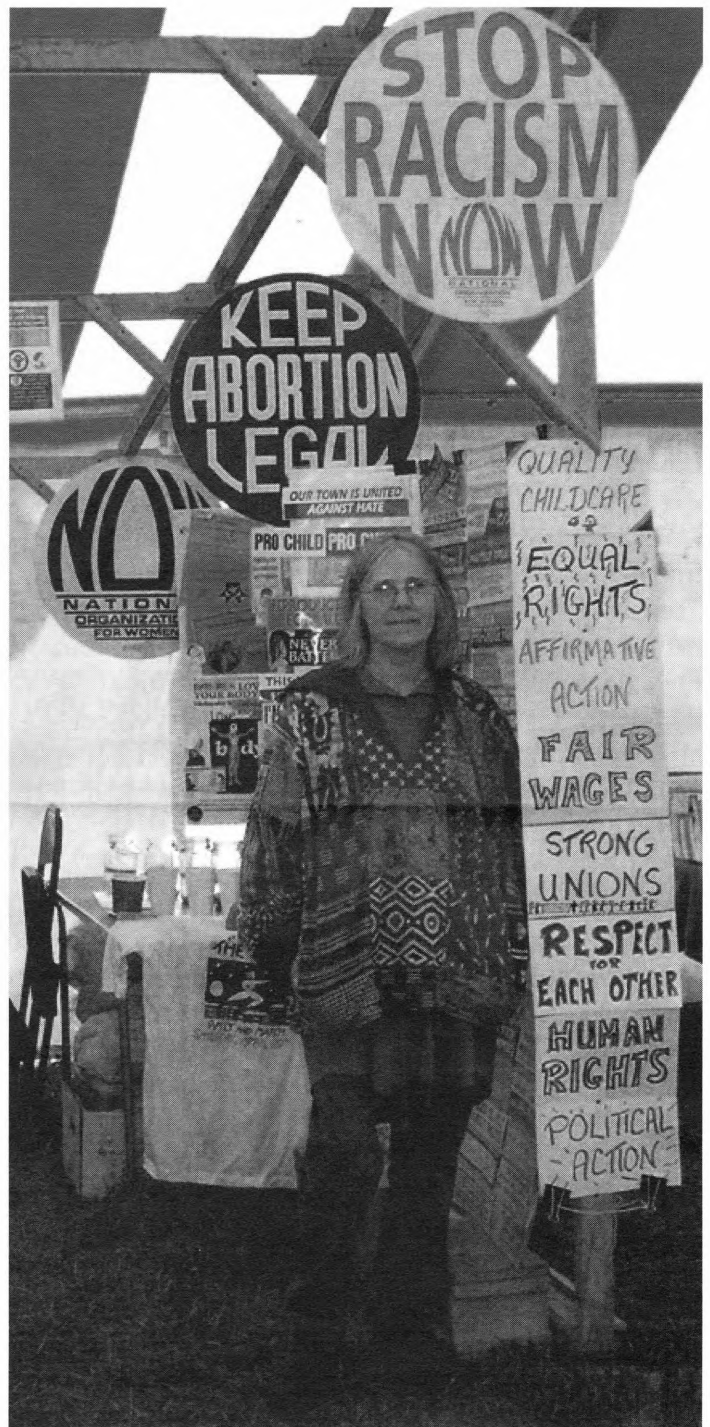
The PAC to defeat the change is called No More Than Four and has already raised over \$10,000. Term limit defenders, such as former State Senate President Rick Bennett, are also trying to push the vote to the 2008 ballot. I don't know how that effort is doing.

Maybe we could call our PAC "Partial Fix With Six"? At least two organizations will join the public debate as opponents of term limits and proponents of Question 5 to at least extend them – the League of Women Voters and Common Cause.

Look for Question 5 on THIS November's Ballot, and vote YES!

ATTENTION: Email Feminists

Due to the death of a hard drive, all your info has been lost. If you would like to continue to receive the occasional email from us, please send a note to us at mainenow@maine.rr.com



Maine Now Coordinator Annie Lunt in our booth at 2006's Common Ground Fair.

GBNOW Chapter Report

By JoAnne Dauphinee

GBNOW's Coordinator, JoAnne Dauphinee, is organizing the Maine NOW Booth, & *Freedom Trash Can* Action, at Common Ground Fair September 21, 22 & 23. This is always a great event for NOW and we love to see you there! Jo also manages Maine NOW's Sustainer Program, mailing a monthly newsletter to high donors (\$5/month minimum) – Jo's Action Message – famous for cartoons, think pieces, & more! And, she cares for the Maine NOW PAC treasury, legislative & candidate & other files. In her spare time (ha ha) she works on some Maine NOW History projects & FAT Liberation!

Our Chapter has between 80-90 members, and is financially secure. Karen Hartnagle continues as our Treasurer. Deanna Partridge organized our annual FAT Women's Clothing Exchange last May – tons of fun as always! Jo organized the HOPE Festival tabling for GBNOW & the FAT Feminist Project – also tons of fun! Deanna and Jo also do occasional actions or talks in GBNOW's name at events our comrades organize.

In our last report, GBNOW activist, Assata Sherrill, had represented NOW at an Anti-Hate Rally in Hancock. Since then, she faced her own incident of harassment while out walking her dog in Bangor. Following the incident, she organized some public conversations to talk about racism and hate crimes.

Maine NOW member, Chris Rusnov, did some organizing around MIFF – the Maine International Film Festival – at Railroad Square Cinema in Waterville. She kindly invited JoAnne to guide (along with Wendy Hazard & Chris) a conversation with viewers of the film "Profit Motive & the Whispering Wind." New GBNOW member, Bev Hazard, drove down with Jo and joined the conversation. This was a moving film honoring many American heroic activists who lived and/or died to help end the oppression of women, sexism, slavery, corporate greed & union-busting, racism, religious oppression, and more. It generated a most thoughtful round of comments.

For the July Maine NOW meeting, GBNOW

organized maps & web info on the Women's History Trails – there are 4 in Portland (& one in Augusta) - as well as the new *Underground Railroad & Anti-Slavery Walking Tour*. Several of us took the time to glimpse some of the Women's East Prom, Old Port, and Black History sites, and were enlightened by the written materials! Check out www.usm.maine.edu/history/newtrail.html & www.portlandfreedomtrail.org/ For Augusta <http://dll.umaine.edu/history/trail/site20.html>

GBNOW will also host the Maine NOW Retreat in October, and continues to frequently raise our voices for feminism! We urge you to join us! Write or call and let us know what feminist adventures you are having! Call JoAnne 989-3306 & leave a message, or email Jo at feministjo@roadrunner.com

Portland NOW Chapter Report

By Jennifer Halm-Perazone

It's been a summer of Festivals for Portland NOW. We had a lot of fun meeting people at the first ever Portland Peace Festival. It was a beautiful day on the Eastern Prom celebrating Peace. We were also at the Festival of Nations in Deering Oaks Park. We had to dodge rainstorms, but we were able to stay dry and keep on listening to great music. It was fun to visit with people and talk about NOW's vision.

Our next fair is the Common Ground Fair on Sept. 21, 22 & 23. Come to Unity and stop by the Social & Political Action tent to say "Hi."

The other issue Portland NOW has been working on is letting our Senators know how upset we are with them because they confirmed the nominations of Roberts and Alito to the Supreme Court. On April 18, the Supreme Court turned back the clock on women's rights, and we have been sending post cards and letters to Senators Snowe and Collins asking them to sign on to the Freedom of Choice Act. FOCA, in effect, codifies Roe v. Wade in federal law. If you have not signed a post card, let us know and we'll get some out to you.

I am happy to say that Representative Tom Allen has signed on as a cosponsor to the Freedom of Choice Act! Make sure to write/call/e-mail him and thank him. It's so important that our members of congress hear from us!

Portland NOW is in its 36th year and for the first time in a long time, our membership has fallen below 100 members. We'd like to keep the chapter going, but that takes money and time from our members. We need you to be more involved and active with the Chapter. *Buying memberships for friends and family or renewing your membership this year is a good way to show you would like to keep the Chapter going.* To be the grass roots organization we are, we not only need your membership and money, but your time. We are a volunteer organization, so the more people that get involved, the more events we can do and the more visible and effective we can be. We are always looking for people to lead and coordinate events, table at events and share ideas for meetings. Always feel free to give Jennifer a call at 871-0618. We'd love to hear from you!

Coalition Reports

Maine NOW is involved in several coalitions: Women's Leadership Action Coalition (WLAC), Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC), and The Maine Choice Coalition (MCC). It was a busy time for these coalitions working to support important legislation affecting women.

Good News for WLAC was the passage of:

- LD 1884, the *Competitiveness Skills Scholarship Act* helping those below 200% of the poverty level to get a degree or certificate in a training program for high-wage jobs in industry clusters that need skilled workers.
- LD 375, *expansion of Maine's Family Medical Leave Law* (FMLA), which added domestic partners and their children to the list of family members for which workers may take job-protected time off.
- LD 1261, which allows FMLA to be used *intermittently*, ensuring medical leave for health needs such as asthma attacks or cancer treatment.
- LD 1627 makes *domestic violence a crime*.

Several bills that would have established harmful barriers to low-income women seeking assistance met their demise, including bills that would have established burdensome residency requirements for women in need of general assistance

and other forms of public assistance (L.D. 12, L.D. 28, and L.D. 957).

Good News for CAHC was the passage of:

- LD 431, which allows the *Dirigo Health Program to be self administered*—CAHC's #1 priority
- LD 1849, which *protects consumers from rising health care costs*. This bill's passage was a great victory. At the start of the session, very few thought it had a chance to pass. While not as strong as the original bill, the amended version sets up a study commission to perform an extensive analysis of the cost drivers in the Maine health system. It will be a real shift in legislators' thinking if they begin to give more attention to cost savings, not cost shifting, in health care.

Further good news for CAHC, within the judicial realm, was the legal victory won by the Attorney General and CAHC to uphold the Savings Offset Payment (SOP) provision of the Dirigo Health Act. The decision affirmed that the Dirigo Program is entitled to interpret the statute that governs their operation to determine the final SOP amount. The first year savings assessed were \$43.7 million.

Bad News for WLAC and the MCC

Of great disappointment to Maine NOW, WLAC and MCC was the failure of L.D. 1309, *An Act To Provide Equity in Funding for Women's Health Care*. This bill would have ensured equal access to reproductive health care by guaranteeing low-income women financial coverage for abortion services. Currently, MaineCare does not cover abortion except in the cases of rape, incest, and when the life of the woman is in danger.

Unfortunately, the bill did not make it out of the Health and Human Services Committee. The bill had strong support in the House of Representatives, but in the Senate there was a deep division between supporters and those opposed. This was not a strict party division, as there are pro-choice Republicans and anti-choice Democrats. A good goal for the next legislative election is to ensure that support in the House remains strong and the Senate gets a stronger pro-choice voice.

The hearing room was well filled in the debate on LD 1309. There were more anti-choice

speakers, but testimony from the supporters was strong. Maine NOW provided testimony in support of the bill. It was also heartening to see a good representation of medical students from the University of New England in support of the bill.

Ruminations on Bernstein's A Woman in Charge

Jo Dauphinee

I've started reading the Hillary Clinton bio, A Woman in Charge by Carl Bernstein. Though not strictly chronological, I think I haven't reached the best parts yet. It seems a fairly sympathetic portrayal so far, but I understand it does not have the "Clinton seal of approval." One of her earliest role models was Margaret Chase Smith. Not a big surprise, since Hillary started life as a Republican, though her political transformation began early.

As a young woman, she heard Martin Luther King Jr. speak/preach. She saw the 1968 Democratic Convention's Chicago police riot up close in person. She was a hard-working organizer and Wellesley College's Go-to Radical. Of course, her 1969 anti-war student commencement address was then, & is now, famous. Co-workers on Nixon's impeachment hearing work, as well as most who ever dated or hung out with her, describe her as warm, fun-loving, "full of mischief" and good humored – not exactly the mainstream media version, eh?

She was an active civil rights advocate (long before meeting Bill) promoting the first Black Studies program at Wellesley. She was also a big children's advocate, initiating an Upward Bound program for inner-city children at Wellesley and forming an early bond (through the League of Women Voters) with Marian Wright Edelman, who later formed the Children's Defense Fund. 1968, the year I graduated from Bangor High School, Hillary was elected in February as President of her class at Wellesley. The anti-war movement was heated &, in March, LBJ announced he would not run for re-election. On April 4th, King was assassinated. On June 5th, Robert Kennedy was assassinated.

That spring, Hillary helped organize a cadre of campus women to work weekends in New Hampshire

for Eugene McCarthy's Presidential bid. Still a Republican, she also worked the Republican Convention for Nelson Rockefeller's attempt to derail Nixon. In 1970, already a bit famous [She was on the cover of Life magazine after that commencement talk], she would go to Yale (where she met Bill), with a treasure of political action to her credit. I didn't recall, tho I've read her book Living History [highly recommended!] that she turned down so many marriage proposals from Bill. And, at least according to Bernstein, it was her own activist & professional future as well as Bill's attitude toward casual sexual encounters that gave her pause even then. Friends thought she might BE President one day & advised her against marrying Bill. Those friends may yet be right.

Words for a Generation 1969 Speaks to 2008

In Hillary's 1969 commencement talk, she said, "...when I asked the class at our rehearsal what it was they wanted me to say for them, everyone came up to me and said, 'Talk about trust.' [But] what can you say about a feeling that permeates a generation and that perhaps is not even understood by those who are distrusted?"

She ended with a poem from classmate Nancy Scheibner, which began:

My entrance into the world of so-called social problems must be with quiet laughter, or not at all.

The Hollow Men of anger and bitterness
The bountiful ladies of righteous degradation
All must be left to a bygone age.



Give a gift of a membership to your favorite feminist friend. See the application on the next page. NOW memberships make lovely gifts, and your gift helps us continue our work!



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

Maine's Leading Feminist Grassroots Organization

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Join Us!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Our vision: to empower women to take feminist action to effect feminist social change.

Our top five priorities: ERA, economic justice, lesbian rights, reproductive freedom, eliminating racism.

NAME: (Please PRINT) _____ PHONE _____

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Sign me up for (a) Greater Bangor NOW ____ (b) Greater Portland NOW ____ (c) At-large ____

Dues rate includes membership at the national, state and, if chosen, local level.

\$ _____ dues enclosed. \$35.00 regular dues. A sliding scale of \$20.00 - \$34.00 is available, if needed. Send, along with your check made payable to Maine NOW, to Maine NOW, 665 Saco Street, Box 172, Westbrook, ME 04092.

**Membership application is for new members only. If you are renewing OR reinstating a recent lapse in membership, please send your renewal to NOW, P.O. Box 1848, Merrifield, VA 22116-9899 and include your member number (found on your label) with your renewal.

Take Action Now!

Urge your Senators to support S.1843, the Fair Pay Restoration Act of 2007, to correct the Supreme Court ruling in Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. gutting workers' ability to sue for wage discrimination.

In Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co., the Bush Supreme Court ruled against a woman who worked for Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company for 19 years before realizing that she was paid significantly less than her male counterparts with the same or less experience. The Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that wage discrimination complaints could only be filed within 180 days of the initial discriminatory salary decision, even if the victim is unaware of the discrimination until much later.

The Ledbetter decision reversed decades of precedent in wage discrimination cases decided under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Just before the August recess, the House passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007 to reinstate prior law. The Senate must move immediately to pass the companion bill, the Fair Pay Restoration Act, introduced by Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), with Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Olympia Snowe, (R-ME) and Arlen Specter (R-PA).

Tell your Senators to reverse the Supreme Court's assault on wage discrimination law by supporting the Fair Pay Restoration Act of 2007.



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