

School Shooters Target Girls, Point to Larger Problem of Violence Against Women

BY KIM GANDY, NATIONAL NOW PRESIDENT

On October 2, Charles Carl Roberts IV, 32, entered an Amish school in Pennsylvania and shot 10 girls, killing five and gravely wounding five others. Roberts ended the rampage by killing himself as police attempted to enter the school.

The problem is so widespread that it can't be explained away with the "few bad apples" theory; we cannot write off all perpetrators of violence against girls as psychotic or evil. Violence against women is far too common an occurrence not to look at it as a societal issue that needs serious and broad-based response.

Evidence found at the scene suggests that Roberts intended to sexually assault the girls at the school that day.

As horrific as this event was, it was not unique. In fact, it may have been triggered by a similar assault just five days earlier, when 53-year-old Duane Morrison walked into a Colorado high school and took six girls hostage, then sexually

assaulted the girls before killing 16-year-old Emily Keyes and himself.

Mass shootings at schools understandably cause alarm as people try to understand how anyone could commit such terrible acts. These appalling crimes are sad and disturbing all on their own, but they also bring to light larger issues that deserve our attention.

The media typically devote significant coverage to school shootings – some of it responsible and thoughtful, some of it sensational and exploitative. Discussion often focuses on gun laws, violence in pop culture, and mental health issues.

For the most part, reporting on these two recent killings has glossed over the fact that girls were the chosen victims. Had students from a specific racial or religious group been targeted for murder, it seems likely that the killings would have been deemed hate crimes immediately and vigorously. Not so when gender is the target.

So, it is up to NOW and feminists everywhere to ask: Why is violence against women still so prevalent in the U.S.? Why do men and boys commit so many acts of murder, rape, molestation and other forms of violence against women and girls?

(continued on page 5)

Maryland NOW Endorses Statewide and MC Candidates

ALLENDRA LETSOME, MD NOW CO-PRESIDENT AND POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE CHAIR

We are delighted that National NOW will be endorsing Ben Cardin for Senator from Maryland. With Cardin and other candidates across the nation, the Democrats may regain a majority within Congress, essential to repairing the damage caused by the Bush administration.

In endorsing Peter Franchot for Comptroller of Maryland, we are not only delighted to be welcoming a new person into the position of Maryland Comptroller, but are happy to have such a strong ally of women on our state's Board of Public Works. Franchot consistently supports a woman's right to choose and helped to lead the charge for the Fair Share Health Act. He has shown his commitment to women by fighting to increase educational and employment opportunities for women and advocating for expanded reproductive health for women.

Even though State Attorney General candidate Doug Gansler is not a member of Maryland NOW, he won the support of the MD NOW PAC through his unwavering commitment to victims of domestic violence. Gansler established the first domestic violence docket in the county, thus providing victims of domestic violence, predominately women, with specially trained prosecutors from the Family Violence team and victim coordinators. Gansler also garnered MD NOW support when he stated that he refused to be deterred by the Supreme Court ruling in *Scheidler*, which prevented the use of the federal RICO statute as a means to bring the leaders of the clinic-violence movement to justice. Gansler said, "As Attorney General, I intend to see a statewide RICO statute implemented. As part of this effort, I will work with NOW to determine whether there is a way to draft this statute to cover those who instigate violence at clinics." Lastly, Gansler vowed to continue the fight to ensure that women are given timely access to birth control medications and emergency contraceptives at pharmacies and hospitals.

(see further endorsements on page 4)

Who Said That?

Rape is a part of war; but it may be more accurate to say that the capacity for dehumanizing another which so corrodes male sexuality carries over from sex to war.

(See answer page 6)

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MC NOW Co-President's Message

BY JEANNETTE FELDNER

Legislatively Speaking,

Pre-Election, We're Looking Ahead to Post-Election

This year, MCNOW is hoping to join forces with other women's groups in the county and state to bring about change for the better for women. And at the same time, we will let you, our members, know about the work of the other organizations.

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) vision is that Maryland women and their families have a right, by law, to an adequate and sustainable quality of life and an opportunity to develop their full potential. Thus, MLAW meets each year to present an annual report, legislative issues by lead groups/sponsors, and a review of the selection process. These issues are then presented to the membership of MLAW, who votes on which issues to advocate for in the upcoming legislative session.

Janet Frank and I (MCNOW Co-Presidents) were at the meeting to hear the following presentations:*

- **Health Care Reform:** This was presented by Lise Van Susteren, M.D., for the Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform. Its mission is to win comprehensive, affordable health care for all by mobilizing Maryland women in this effort. Go to www.mdhealthcarereform.org for more information. The newest coalition member is the 22,000-member Maryland Nurses Association.
- **Extension of Civil Orders of Protection (COPs):** This was presented by Michael Cohen of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence. Effort is to extend the duration of a protective order to two years. Go to www.mnadv.org for more info.
- **Crimes of Violence—Sexual Abuse of a Child:** This was presented by Lisae Jordan of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Effort would add the sexual abuse of a minor to the definition of crimes of violence when it is perpetrated against a minor under age 10. Information available from lcjordan@mcasa.org.
- Other issues presented included **Wrongful Detainer** (Domestic Violence Community Women's Law Center of Maryland); **Voter Registration Protection Act** (Justice Maryland); **Crime Lab Funding and Licensing** (Office of the Public Defender, State of Maryland)

To find out how to join MLAW and for more information, call 443-519-1005 or email admin@mdlegagenda4women.org or visit the web site www.mdlegagenda4women.org.

*Thank you, Duchy Trachtenberg of MDNOW, for the brief synopses of the MLAW issue presentations.

SAVE THE DATE:

Montgomery County Commission for Women's
27th Annual Women's Legislative Briefing
(Just as the Maryland legislative session is getting started)

Sunday, January 28, 2007
12:30 - 5 p.m.

National 4-H Conference Center
7100 Connecticut Ave.
Chevy Chase MD 20815

Keynote Speaker: **Donna Brazile**

Go to www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw for more info from the Montgomery County Commission for Women, the main sponsor. MCNOW will also be a sponsor of this event.

MC Commission for Women: Useful Today?

CWI NEWSLETTER

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES

Commissions for women differ from other women's rights advocacy groups in that each is established by the government for the jurisdiction it serves. Judith Vaughan-Prather, executive director of the Montgomery County Government Commission for Women explained at a recent meeting of the Clearinghouse for Women's Issues. While they are advocates for women's rights, commissions have a different role to play, which is advisory in nature.

While most commissions for women around the country do not have much of a budget, some have full staffing rather than having to rely on volunteers, and a few, such as the Montgomery County Commission, offer women's counseling services as well.

The Montgomery County Commission for Women was established in 1972, and consists of a 15-member board. The commission was created by law, which Vaughan-Prather said provides permanence to the agency and makes it more difficult to abolish under conservative administrations. It means that public hearings must be held if someone wants to disband the commission or change it in any way.

The law specifies that there must be an executive director for the commission, which means there must be a budget in order to pay the salary for the position. In the case of Montgomery County's commission, the executive director is not a political appointee. The law also stipulates that, of the 15 members of the advisory board, nine must represent other women's advocacy groups in the county.

Vaughan-Prather described the work of the MC commission's committees. The Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee chooses bills that could potentially have an effect on women in the county, and decides what kind of response is needed. The Status of Women in Montgomery County (SWIM) Committee conducts research on the demographics of women in the county. It uses databases that have already been compiled by other county groups in order to find data specifically about women.

The Immigrant Women in Montgomery County (IWIM) Committee is focused on women living in the county who have emigrated from other countries, specifically those who work in low-wage positions and may be more vulnerable to discrimination, abuse and harassment. The IWIM Committee has produced pamphlets in five languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese) to educate these members of the community about their rights. The committee is currently working on a guide on the needs of immigrant women who are domestic workers and for their employers. These guides provide information about legal requirements, best practices, a sample employment agreement, and lists of resources.

The commission offers scholarships for girls in middle school to attend computer camps at Montgomery College. It also runs a Counseling and Career Center, which offers

personal, couples, and career counseling, as well as other support groups, classes, and services for several thousand women every year.

In addition to her position as director of the county commission, Vaughan-Prather serves as executive director of the interim staff for the National Association for Commissions for Women. The national organization is a non-partisan group that gives a voice to women's commissions on Capitol Hill and helps member commissions work on common areas of interest. It also conducts a national convention offering training specific to commissions and staff. There are approximately 225 commissions for women in the country today. (www.womensclearinghouse.org.)

(If you want to know which issues the MC Commission chooses for 2007, attend its annual Women's Legislative Briefing on Sunday, January 28, at the 4-H Conference Center, 7100 Conn. Ave., Chevy Chase. The keynote speaker at the free event will be Donna Brazile, former head of Bill Clinton's presidential campaign and current chair of the Democratic National Committee's Voting Rights Institute. For more information, call 240-777-8330.)



WASHINGTON SPEAK for PEDOPHILIA

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR JANUARY ISSUE:
December 20, 2006

MD/MC NOW Endorsements

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Doug Gansler

MARYLAND STATE SENATE

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District 5

Nancy Navarro

School Shooting (continued from page 1)

What can we do to prevent and eventually stop violence against women? Education is clearly needed, as is zero tolerance from male leaders in every organization and field, including sports, the military, religion, entertainment, schools, law enforcement and government.

The problem is so widespread that it can't be explained away with the "few bad apples" theory. Violence against women is far too common an occurrence not to look at it as a societal issue that needs a serious and broad-based response.

In numerous school shootings, females have been targeted, and not just by adult men. Teenage boys and younger have sought out and killed girls. In 1998 in Jonesboro, Arkansas, two boys, just 13 and 11 years old, killed four girls and a female teacher, injuring nine other girls and one male teacher. In 2000, a six-year-old Michigan boy shot and killed a girl, and there are many, many more instances.

Look around you and you will see the news stories every day: From rape and sex harassment at military academies to pregnant women killed by their husbands, to men surfing the internet looking for young girls to molest.

It seems fair to ask again: Why?

Educator and author Jackson Katz explains: "The issue is not just violence in the media but the construction of violent masculinity as a cultural norm. From rock and rap music and videos, Hollywood action films, professional and college sports, the culture produces a stream of images of violent, abusive men and promotes characteristics such as dominance, power, and control as means of establishing or maintaining manhood."

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The continued stigma against being "feminine" or sharing any traits with women works hand-in-hand with the aggressive image of manhood in our culture. Because women are frequently perceived as inferior to men, a presumed insult from, rejection by, or upstaging by a woman can lead a boy or man to reassert his authority with threats or acts of violence.

It's hard to ignore societal messages that violence and intimidation are acceptable tactics for getting what you want – particularly at a time when war and torture get the stamp of approval from our country's highest office.

Terrible violent acts are committed against women every day. Even when it is not a main headline, or fails to make the news at all, violence against women festers in every corner of our country.

What can we do to prevent and eventually stop violence against women? Education is clearly needed, as is zero tolerance from male leaders in every organization and field, including sports, the military, religion, entertainment, schools, law enforcement and government.

NOW has long fought to include gender (as well as other unprotected and targeted groups) in federal hate crimes legislation, but no such legislation has passed Congress as yet. Indeed, gender-based hate crimes are not even part of the hate crime statistics collected by the FBI. After the November elections, we will begin our work again, hopefully with a more supportive Congress.

If the U.S. is to have any moral authority about how women are treated around the globe, we must get our priorities straight here at home.

At this moment another woman or girl is being harassed, abused, raped or killed. The fear of sexual predators, abusers and murderers is causing girls and women to walk in fear to school, work, the grocery store, even through their own front doors. When will we say "enough is enough?"

Answer to Who Said That, page 1

Adrienne Rich, *Caryatid*, 1973

Adrienne Rich, born in 1929, is a feminist poet and author. "I am a feminist," she wrote, "because I feel endangered, psychologically and physically, by this society and because I believe that the women's movement is saying that we have come to an edge of history when men – insofar as they are embodiments of the patriarchal idea – have become dangerous to children and other living things, themselves included."



Elsewhere in the World

ABRIDGED FROM WWW.WOMENSENEWS.ORG

September 21, 2006 Chile Teens' Sexual Health Sparks Storm

Chile's efforts to ward off criticism of its reproductive policies sparked a debate that may delay its signing a protocol of CEDAW, the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. In mid-August, Chile provided CEDAW with a progress report. The committee of 23 women's rights experts expressed alarm over Chile's strict abortion laws and high rate of teen pregnancy. On Sept. 2, Chile's health minister announced the distribution of emergency contraception pills free of charge for women age 14 and up. The distribution ignited protest in a country still regarded as the most socially conservative in South America. On Sept. 13, the Santiago Court of Appeals ordered the government to stop providing the pills to females age 14 to 18 without parental consent. The UN committee's criticisms raised fear that ratifying the CEDAW protocol would strip Chile of sovereignty and allow women to bring cases before an international tribunal. Until the controversy erupted, newly elected President Michelle Bachelet had made ratifying CEDAW a priority along with child care, anti-discrimination legislation, and affirmative action.

September 27, 2006 Chavez's Embrace of Iran Leader Insults Women

Venezuela's Hugo Chavez has publicly embraced Iran's reactionary President Ahmadinejad. In an opinion piece, Jennifer Fasulo, co-founder of a group supporting Middle East women, says this shows how women's lives are being maneuvered by "nationalist realpolitik": She acknowledges that, as oil producers, Venezuela and Iran have common interests. And one expects Chavez to condemn U.S. military threats against Iran. But there is no excuse for declaring solidarity with a theocratic culture that treats women like sub-human beings. This is a government Chavez calls "heroic" and "revolutionary." His lack of concern for women's rights in Iran is all too common among male leftists. Among too many of them, women are often simply not on the radar screen. If women's rights do get mentioned, they're often dismissed as an issue of "culture." The insidi-

ous use of the word "culture" implies that women are brutally subjected, not through force and violence, but because they or their "culture" wants it that way, and therefore it's OK. How can Chavez – a declared socialist and defender of the downtrodden – align himself with such a reactionary regime, when socialist and feminist movements within Iran are fighting against it? Chavez deserves credit for improving the lives of poor people and curbing the abuses of capitalism in Venezuela. And, although he opposes abortion, he has pushed economic incentives for women. But this does not erase the fact that human liberation is better served by supporting the brave Iranian activists who are fighting to save women's lives and chart a third course between U.S. domination and right-wing opposition to it.

October 18, 2006 Nicaragua Extends Abortion Ban

Nicaragua's parliament is considering extending its abortion ban to include cases where the mother's life is at risk. Pro-choice groups fear that a complete ban of all abortions may become law in the near future. If it does, doctors could face a prison sentence up to 30 years for performing an abortion to save a woman's life.

October 21, 2006 UN Focuses on Indigenous Women

For the first time, the UN has formally addressed violence against indigenous women. The International Indigenous Women's Forum on Oct. 16 urged the adoption of the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and issued a companion report on violence against women. Migration, human trafficking, and interference with traditional land and resource rights are factors in the violence women face, the report said. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, the UN special rapporteur for indigenous issues, said at a UN panel discussion that the report does not receive adequate attention. "Indigenous women are at the very bottom of the heap," he said. "Contrary to what the general public believes, violence against women is not only inflicted by those of non-indigenous society. Women suffer from the violence of men-folk within their own communities." Stavenhagen added that the latter type of violence is rarely discussed.

How It Was

- 2 The Ninety-Nines, a flying organization formed by Amelia Earhart and Ruth Nichols, holds its first planning meeting at Curtiss Airport, Valley Stream, N.Y., 1929.
- 5 A writer for the St. Louis Mirror reports, "There is nothing wrong with Miss [Emma] Goldman's gospel that I can see, except this: she is about eight thousand years ahead of her age," 1908.
- 8 Washington state passes a constitutional amendment to permit woman suffrage, 1910.
- 13 Emily Batch, World War I pacifist, co-founder of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and professor of sociology and economics at Wellesley until fired because of her politics, wins the Nobel Peace Prize, 1946.

NOV-DEC (1900 – 1949)

- 20 Pauli Murray, civil rights lawyer, Episcopal priest, first African American to earn a doctorate at Yale Law School, and noted wit, born, 1910.
- 21 Rebecca Felton, America's first female senator, serves the first day of her two-day term. Selected to fill a vacancy, the 85-year-old suffragist barely has time to give her maiden speech before the elected male senator takes over the next day, 1922.
- 22 Billie Jean King, tennis champion who won 20 Wimbledon titles and the most Grand Slam titles by an American, and who defeated Bobby Riggs in a highly politicalized contest, born, 1943.

The Watchful Eye

BY MARY BAILEY



Eye on the elections. A biggie this election is South Dakota's initiative to repeal a statewide ban on virtually all abortions. Last March, the state enacted the nation's first outright ban on abortion, allowing the procedure only to save a woman's life. The ban was scheduled to take effect in July, but activists got enough signatures to put the law on the referendum ballot. According to a Sept. Zogby International poll, 47 percent of state voters opposed and 44 percent approved of the ban.... *Another biggie: eight states* –

Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin – have ballot initiatives banning same-sex marriage. And 20 more states have already adopted constitutional bans.

Glimmer of hope. On Oct. 25, New Jersey's Supreme Court bucked the trend and ordered legal equality for same-sex couples. It ruled that the state constitution gives lesbians and gays the same rights as married heterosexuals. But, the court said, the state legislature must decide whether to recognize such unions as marriage, because the state constitution guaranteed same-sex unions the substantive elements of marriage but not its symbolic meaning. The dissenters of the 4-3 decision had argued that gays were entitled to the label as well as the rights of marriage. The ruling gives the legislature 180 days to include gays within the definition of marriage or grant them equal rights under some other name. Currently, only Massachusetts permits gay marriage, while Vermont and Connecticut give gay civil unions equality with marriage. Now Republicans are trying to use the New Jersey decision to bring laggard conservatives to the polls.

Medical news today. *Testosterone can kill brain cells* if the level is high enough. Large doses of steroids used to increase muscle mass can cause heightened aggressiveness, hyperexcitability, and suicidal tendencies — all evidence of brain cell death, according to a Yale School of Medicine study.... *One in 10 men* said they had paid for sex, according to a survey of over 2,500 men at a sexual health clinic in the UK between October 2002 and February 2004. Of those, most paid for sex with a woman and one in four said that they repeatedly used prostitutes. Almost half of the respondents (43 percent) said they already had a partner when they paid for sex. The study was published in the October 2006 issue of *Sexually Transmitted Infections*.... *What influences women* when they make

child care custody decisions that will bring them into future contact with a violent or controlling husband? Fear, pragmatism, and the belief – sometimes reinforced in mandated divorce education classes – that their children will suffer if both parents are not in their lives. Although experts recommend that abused women be screened out of co-parenting classes, such a class was mandated in the two Missouri counties studied. The report was published in the August Journal of Social and Personal Relationships. (medicalnewstoday.com, 9-28-06, 10-04-06 and 10-10-06)

Not so fast! When Feminists for Life recently gained ownership of Susan B. Anthony's birthplace in Adams, Mass., the group quickly cited an 1869 article in Anthony's newspaper labeling abortion "a most monstrous crime" that "will burden [a woman's] conscience in life, it will burden her soul in death." Pulitzer Prize-winning author Stacy Schiff threw down the gauntlet: "What is generally not mentioned is that the essay argues against an anti-abortion law; its author did not believe legislation would resolve the issue of unwanted pregnancy," Schiff wrote. Also, she noted, "according to the editors of Anthony's papers, the article is not hers." (New York Times, 10-13-06) Thanks to Paddy Cook for passing this along.

Labeling the murders of young girls in Pennsylvania and Colorado "school violence" is blatant misogyny — they should be called what they are: hate crimes against women, writes Susan Killebrew of Oakland, Calif. to The Washington Post. "Referring to these shootings as school violence makes as much sense as categorizing the attack on the World Trade Center as violence in the workplace." (10-17-06).... "Why Aren't We Shocked?" asks columnist Bob Herbert in the New York Times, when the "killers went out of their way to separate the girls from the boys, and then deliberately attacked only the girls?" He continues, "We have become so accustomed to living in a society saturated with misogyny that violence against females is more or less to be expected. Stories about the rape, murder and mutilation of women and girls are staples in the news, as familiar to us as weather broadcasts." Herbert lists instances: Men at sporting events chanting to nearby women to show their breasts... a Clinique ad showing a woman's face splattered with lotion to simulate the climatic shot of a porn video... The sexualized image of the murdered 6-year-old JonBenet Ramsey repeated on TV for 10 years now. "We're all implicated in this carnage because the relentless violence against women and girls is linked at its core to the wider society's casual willingness to see them first and foremost as sexual vessels." (10-16-06) Thanks to Jessica Morgan for forwarding this article.

How It Was (cont)

23 While contemplating the remains of your Thanksgiving turkey, remember it was a woman who tradition says was the first person to set foot on Plymouth Rock.

30 Mother Jones, 100 years old, dies of old age, 1930. Her lifetime motto was, "Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living."

December

4 Emmeline Pankhurst returns to Plymouth, England, from her U.S. tour, is arrested at sea, and forcibly carried away to prison to begin yet another hunger strike, 1913.

5 Mary McLeod Bethune founds the National Council of Negro Women, 1935.

16 Margaret Mead, noted anthropologist, proponent of trial marriage, born, 1901.

20 Deported to Russia, Emma Goldman, co-publisher of the anarchist paper *Mother Earth*, spends her first day at sea on the *Buford*, 1919.

24 Ohio suffragist Ethel Vorce writes a sister crusader, "It is impossible at present to know whether the 'effete' East will take to us as kindly as the 'middle class' Middle West," 1914.

25 While you stand under the mistletoe, smile gently at temperance advocate Carry Nation's words after her first kiss: "I am ruined."

(Selections from *The Liberated Woman's Appointment Calendar, 1972-1974*, and the *National Women's History Project newsletter, nwhp@1b.central.com*)

MC NOW Calendar of Events

Chapter Meetings generally take place on the first or second Monday of each month. All members welcome.

November

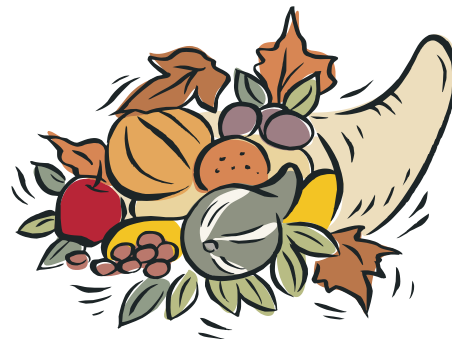
- 3 (Fri) 2006 Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Conference. "Changing Culture, Involving Men, Engaging Communities." Marriott Baltimore/Washington International Airport Hotel. Focus on prevention. Sponsored by MD Coalition Against Sexual Assault and MD Network Against Domestic Violence. www.mcasa.org or 301-352-4574.
- 7 (Tue) ELECTION DAY. Maryland needs your vote!
- 8 (Wed) 1-2:30 pm. "Caregiving, a Women's Issue," National Capital Chapter of Older Women's League, Sumner School, 17th and M Sts. NW. Free.
- 13 (Mon) 7-9 pm. MC NOW CHAPTER DINNER MEETING. Hollywood East restaurant, University Blvd. RSVP and Directions: lj.feldner@verizon.net or 301-942-0938.
- 14 (Tue) 6:30 pm. "Remembering a Night of Terror" experienced by suffrage prisoners in 1917. Vigil at Alice Paul's graveside, 2201 Riverton Rd. at Rt. 130, Cinnaminson, NJ. RSVP and directions: 856-231-1885 or info@alicepaul.org.
- 19 (Sun) 12-3 pm. MARYLAND NOW COUNCIL MEETING. Tentative location: Progressive MD office, Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. duchy@comcast.net.

December

- 3 (Sun) 2 pm. Tea at Paulsdale, recently restored home of Alice Paul, 128 Hooton Road, Mount Laurel, NJ. 856-231-1885 or info@alicepaul.org.
- 11 (Mon) MC NOW CHAPTER DINNER MEETING. Hollywood East restaurant. See Nov. 13.

January

- 28 (Sun) 12:30-5 pm. MC Commission for Women's 2007 Women's Legislative Briefing. National 4-H Conference Center, 7100 Conn. Ave., Chevy Chase. Donna Brazile keynoter. Free. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw or 240-777-8330.



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