



# LAA/UN COMMITTEE

Legislative Awareness & Advocacy/  
United Nations Committees

October 2008

Zonta Club  
Of  
Northern Valley, NJ

## The Presidential Election Get the Facts and Then Vote!



Many of you have probably been receiving slanderous emails about one candidate or another. Many times the information contained in the email is totally untrue, but sometimes there is a grain of truth which is stretched to the breaking point.

There are two very good websites which are impartial that you may wish to visit.

Procon.org breaks down the

differences between the two parties and does not offer opinions as to which is better or worse. It merely gives the gist of the positions of each of the presidential candidates on the major issues facing our nation.

Another website that is of particular interest is factcheck.org. It takes apart the statements and tells whether they are totally false, partially false, partially true or totally true, based on facts, not supposition or innuendo. It also looks at the current crop of political ads and does the same analysis.

It is important that we make a choice that we feel

is best for each of us. It is also important that we do so based on factual information. Everyone is urged to make a decision and, of course, to make sure that on voting day, he or she takes advantage of the right we all have living in a great democracy.

Perhaps we could make a point of checking in with our neighbors and friends to see if they need a ride to their polling place or if they need to cast an absentee ballot. In New Jersey, absentee ballots must be applied for (by mail) up to 7 days prior to the election. Voters may also apply in person to the County Clerk until 3 pm the day before the election.

Written & edited by  
Mary Ann Tarantula

## OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

In its Fall 2008 newsletter, Shelter Our Sisters noted that Domestic Violence Awareness Month has an especially ironic meaning this year. As we are all aware, we are in difficult economic times. The state of New Jersey has cut money for services such as those offered victims by Shelter Our Sisters. That means that our continued support is essential.

In the letter from Anita L. Allen and Elaine K. Myerson which appears in the newsletter, they have emphasized that

the services offered by the shelter are more than just emergency services. They state, "...it helps to empower our clients with solid skills so they can reach their goals of becoming self-sufficient and not think twice about putting themselves back in danger."

Our RAVE Walk Committee has been meeting, planning our 2009 walk. All of us should get involved so that we may continue our support of both the Shelter and the Rape Crisis Center.

## What Should the Next President Do for Women and Girls?

What are your priorities when it comes to issues that should be addressed, issues concerning women and girls? The following are some issues gleaned from various activist organizations:

- Economic equality should be a priority. That means ensuring equal pay for work of equal value.
- The alleviation of poverty should be a priority. Poor women and other vulnerable and underserved women are often left out of “stimulus plans” and are trying to support themselves and their families at great odds.

- Ending Violence Against Women must be a priority. The United States should take a leadership role in the effort to end violence against women and girls—which



includes child marriage, honor killing, genital mutilation and rape as a weapon of war.

- Validating Women’s Civil and Human Rights should be a priority. They include the right to be free of discrimination based on gender.
- Helping to change societal attitudes should be a priority. These attitudes stereotype and constrain women and girls.

## Iron Jawed Angels Wrap-up

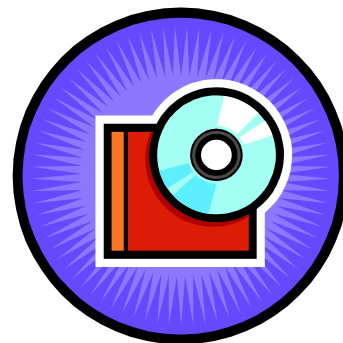
A showing of “Iron Jawed Angels” took place on Tuesday, October 14th, at the Englewood Free Public Library in Englewood, NJ. While the showing did not draw a standing-room only crowd, those who attended were moved by the images and were treated to some important information about the need to vote.

We also made sure that everyone had lots of information about our club as

well as about Zonta International.

Special thanks to Judy Liebman for doing all the “legwork” for this project. Unfortunately Judy was not able to attend as she was in the hospital. She is home now and on the road to recovery.

We donated a copy of the movie to the Englewood Library and will be donating copies to five other libraries in the Northern Valley area.



## National Network to End Domestic Violence/NOW

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, approximately 1200 women a year ( three every day) die in the United States as a result of domestic violence. One in six women has experienced rape or attempted rape and more than one million women are stalked every year.

These are astounding statistics. There are many activist organizations working to stem this tide.

The National Network writes that our

leaders need to take action to end the devastating impact of domestic violence.

Another organization,, NOW, has launched a program aimed at college students. It encourages students to assess the availability and awareness of services and programs to respond to rape and sexual assault on their campuses. Once the assessment is complete, they are urged to contact their campus administrators if they have any concerns about services that need to be

improved.





## UNITED NATIONS NGO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN RURAL WOMEN....CLIMATE CHANGE

The week-long meetings of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women will take place in early March of 2009 and the emphasis will be in these areas—the plight of rural women and the effects of climate change on women.

Rural women all over the world suffer particularly due to the fact that they very often live in poverty.

At a recent Public Information session, a panel of speakers told of efforts being made in Canada and Liberia, as well as other parts of the developing world.

Interestingly, we in the United States do not think about migrant workers in Canada, but in the province of Ontario there are many female migrant workers, mostly from Mexico. Many of them are denied rights and there are several groups that have formed to help them, but these migrant workers are invisible in the mainstream of Canadian politics.

A representative of UNIFEM, Letty Chwara, was part of the panel. She

spoke of a program that is taking place in Liberia which UNIFEM hopes to replicate in other parts of the world. It is titled Rural Women World Bank Program. With a grant from the World Bank and \$150,000 from the government of South Korea, a group of women in Liberia are pursuing empowerment and independence through farming. Keeping in mind that women do not have land rights in Liberia, UNIFEM was able to obtain agreements for the women to lease the land so that they may farm it. They are growing cassava from which they can make many products. The entire cycle, from planting, harvesting, production and shipping is put in place. There is hope that this project will provide sustainable income for these women.

Of course, the project will be evaluated by all parties for relevance, and demonstrated success. It will be looked at to decide if it is capable of being scaled up within 3 to 5 years. An impact evaluation will be made to find whether or not it has been successful in empowering women.

The last criteria to be assessed will be to see if there is financial sustainability.

Women's survival, and that of their households and communities, depends on access to and control of natural resources: land, water, forests and plants. Women have learned to manage these resources in order to preserve them for future generations. Yet, women's access to and control of these resources is far from guaranteed.



### WEDO Joins in Supporting Climate Change Initiatives

WEDO (Women's Environment Development Organization) has instituted a sustainable Development Program which "advocates for the inclusion of a gender perspective, women's empowerment and a rights-based approach in environmental and sustainable development decision-making."

Climate change is one of the most urgent issues of our time and it is not gender neutral. We have seen erratic

weather—hurricanes, droughts, floods and heat waves—that are already



affecting populations in nearly every part of the world. Historically women have been restricted in their ability to

make decisions. For example, recently in an area that had suffered a drought, the women (who knew where the water sources were) were excluded from the process. It took many weeks, and deaths, before they were allowed to join the men in making decisions about where to find water.

As the Kyoto Protocol expires at the end of 2009, a meeting in Copenhagen will take place in which many of these issues will be raised.