

"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful." – Malala Yousafzai

Voice for Choice

Newsletter of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Winter 2016

Medical Abortion: A Game-Changer

VESSEL Film and Discussion on January 24

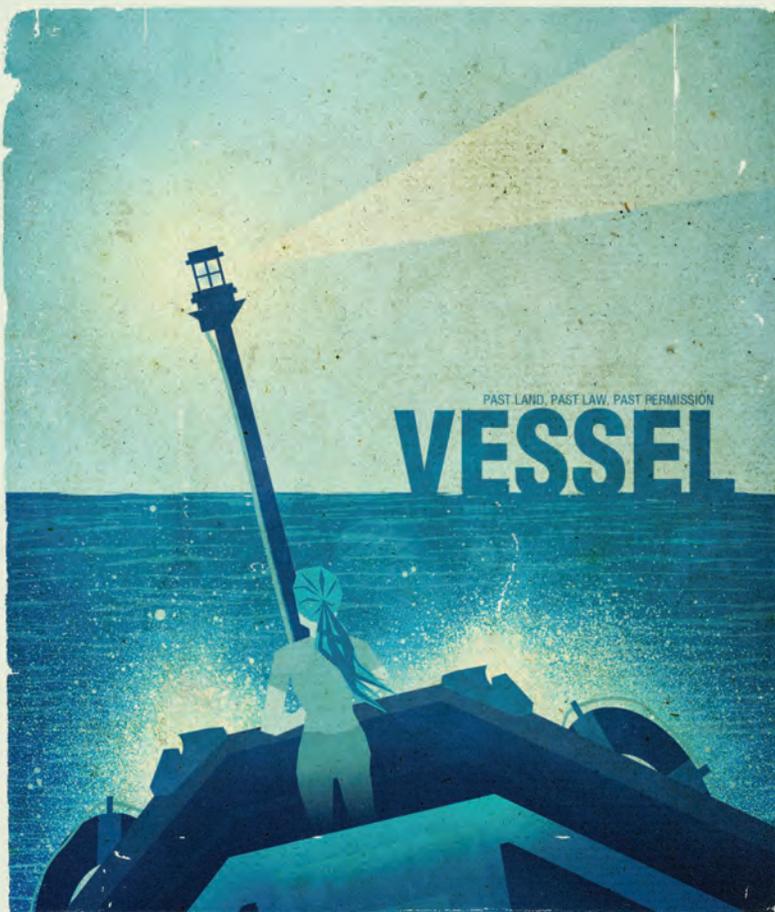
by Rev. Millie Peters and Carol Savkovich, KRCRC Board

In Commemoration of Roe v. Wade

VESSEL Film & Discussion

Sunday January 24, 3 p.m. at The Temple

5101 U.S. Highway 42 in Louisville • No Charge



In commemoration of the Roe v. Wade decision, KRCRC and A Fund Inc. will screen the documentary film VESSEL, followed by a discussion, on Sunday, January 24, 2016, 3-5 pm at The Temple, 5101 U S Highway 42 in Louisville.

VESSEL follows the amazing journey of Dr. Rebecca Gomperts and her organization “Women on Waves,” as they take a ship equipped with a medical clinic into international waters to offer safe medical abortions (the “abortion pill”) to countries where abortion is illegal.

Confronting controversy and obstacles at each turn, but also garnering media attention and spreading the word that medical abortion is a possibility, Dr. Gompert and her crew eventually refine their mission, moving from the waves to the web, and creating a network of empowered activists who trust women to handle abortion themselves. Their strong belief is that a woman's choice to decide what is happening to her own body is a basic human right.

“Their strong belief is that a woman's choice to decide what is happening to her own body is a basic human right.”

Join us to view this truly inspiring film, and stay for the discussion afterwards led by local experts. Let's talk about how medical abortions are affecting the abortion picture in the U.S., and how we can best make our voices heard in our community as we advocate for reproductive freedom.

Escorts Double Down In The Face Of Clinic Property Destruction

By Meg, Volunteer Clinic Escort

In mid-November, the clinic we escort at [EMW in Louisville] suffered its second act of property destruction within a three week span. People have used words including ‘insanity’ and ‘domestic terrorism’ when reacting to what happened. The accompanying photo was taken by an escort. More details about this and the previous attack (also resulting in a broken window) can be found in this article.

Now, as you might imagine, while police, clinic staff, and whatever additional parties have been filling out papers and watching surveillance footage, those of us on the sidewalk are going through our own reactions and feelings about this. Destruction of this property does not directly affect escorts. It’s not our window to replace. It’s not even our bosses’ window, as we are all volunteers and are only loosely connected to this clinic. That said, the indirect impact on escorts could possibly be more tangible than what the clinic staff has dealt with.

Five days a week, escorts stand toe-to-toe (often literally) with the people who encourage and enable this kind of extreme aggression to grow and thrive. We hold space and absorb hateful remarks day after day. We have been assaulted, and had our buttons pushed too many times to count. Escorts often harden themselves to the awful things that are spewed at us, but we can’t help but hear what is said, and we are often triggered by the terrible things that are said to clients and escorts: slut shaming, racism, low jabs about people’s physical features, bringing up personal details about people’s children, or lost loved ones. Remarks obviously meant to hurt us from people claiming to be there out of a love for life (and presumably people...). It is bullying. We know this.

The bullies who come to protest – to exercise their freedom of speech – come for many reasons. Many come for reasons rooted in some sort of morals they’ve been taught. Some come from a place of misdirected compassion. There are those who are truly peaceful and simply pray. As far as I am concerned, none of it is ok. The reason why not is clearly demonstrated by the photo above. As long as people are kneeling and praying, and showing up to make their statement that they believe what someone else is doing with their body and life is wrong, to me they are enabling these broken windows. I think that people who drag their young children out in the cold to stand on a sidewalk and shame others are contributing to a culture that encourages rocks through clinic windows. We know from history that it doesn’t stop at bricks. (Search Drs. David Gunn and



George Tiller, plus clinic bombings, etc.) Sometimes it’s easy to feel powerless in the face of such a sick and widespread culture, but as justice advocates we are never alone and we are powerful too.

The escort who snapped the photo of the broken door also talked about how on that very windy morning little pieces of glass kept clinking on the ground as the clients entered the clinic. I was not there that morning, but to me it sounds a little eerie, and maybe stressful. I was glad to hear that the glass was replaced that day, and even more pleased to read the encouraging quotes from the clinic director in the article linked above.

Something like violence at a nearby abortion clinic isn’t something to be taken lightly, and for those of us there regularly, it won’t be easily forgotten.

The impact on those who occupy both ‘sides’ on the sidewalk has been strong. Someone described the protesters

Cont. on page 3

Escorts *Cont. from page 2.*

there the Saturday following the glass break as possibly giddy (sick, huh?). As escorts we create and hold space because we think sidewalk bullying is wrong. After such an incident, I think we all feel especially convicted to hold that space a little differently now, deeper, perhaps.

So, when I say we are doubling down in the face of these attacks, I guess you could picture a number of things. It's got nothing to do with triple-meat sandwiches, despite us being in Kentucky. It's got more to do with practicing what we already do pretty damn well, but maybe through a cracked lens, if you will.

Things we will continue to NOT do:

- Bring signs that add to visual clutter/chaos for clients and really carry messages more for the protesters, which might escalate tension. Signs are also often used to block and shove, and none of that is part of escorting.
- Swarm clients and obstruct the sidewalk the way protesters do.
- Start campaigns to recruit more escorts. We are constantly training new escorts and engaging interested people, but we don't need to recruit. The protesters, legislators and media do that for us.

Things we will continue to practice (possibly with a little more depth now):

- Gain consent from every client before walking and talking with them.
- Keep de-escalation in mind at all times.
- Hold space as best we are able.
- Make client experiences our main focus. We are not there for antis.
- Limit engagement with protesters, because to do otherwise might justify their presence in their minds. (This is by far the hardest, and is almost impossible to practice all the time, but when we do the result is remarkable. Also, not all escorts practice non-engagement the same way, and that's ok too)

Cont. on page 6

A CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS GRAPHIC

Pass the EACH Woman Act

As a result of the Hyde Amendment and similar restrictions, nearly 29 million women of reproductive age do not have insurance coverage for abortion, a legal medical procedure.

Who still doesn't have insurance coverage for abortion?

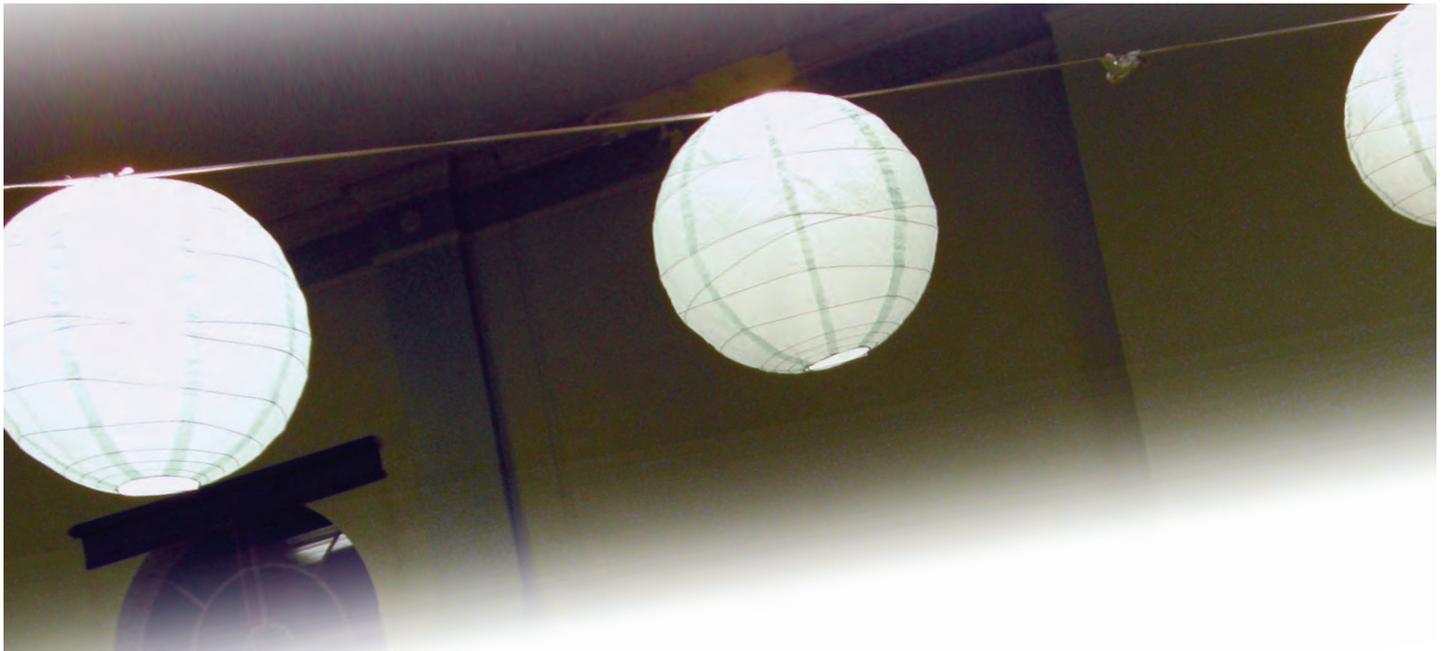
X	Federal women employees	398,000
X	Women covered by Medicaid (nationally, including the District of Columbia)	14.9 million
X	Women in the military	1.1 million
X	Women veterans	623,000
X	Federal women inmates	10,000
X	American Indian/Alaska Native women covered by the Indian Health Service	399,000
X	Women in the Peace Corps	4,000
X	Women in states that restrict private insurance coverage of abortion	8.7 million
X	State women employees with insurance plans that restrict coverage of abortion	2.4 million
Total		28,534,000 women

The Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance, or EACH Woman, Act would prohibit all funding restrictions and help restore equal access to abortion for these women.

Note: The total number of women of reproductive age with restricted access to abortion does not include wives and dependents of individuals with these insurance plans or retired federal and public employees. Numbers denoted with "*" represent women who are able to purchase a supplemental policy in certain states, but the calculation of how many women do this is unavailable. Please inquire with the authors about the calculation of total numbers of women affected. Abortions for women whose pregnancies resulted from rape or incest or whose lives would be endangered by continuing a pregnancy may be covered, but they are often subjected to stringent reporting requirements. Currently, women veterans do not receive these exceptions.

Source: Heidi Williamson and Sara Birchler, "Pass the EACH Woman Act: Sources" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2015), available at <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/07070559/EACHwomanAct-sources.pdf>.

Center for American Progress



“Luminaria” Gala Evening Honors Pro-Choice Legislators, Cunningham

By Terrie Hill, KRCRC Board

KRCRC’s Luminaria event, honoring Kentucky’s pro-choice lawmakers, was held on October 18 at the Highland Community Campus, bedecked with hanging Chinese lanterns.

Rev. Millie Peters, a KRCRC board member, opened the evening by leading us in prayer for continued guidance and support.

Our Rev. Gil Schroerlucke Reproductive Justice Award was presented to Kate Cunningham,



chair of Kentucky’s abortion fund A Fund, Inc. Kate was introduced by Rev. Donna Morton, one of KRCRC’s original organizers, who shared Kate’s long history of activism for many causes (see article on Kate, page 6).

But the main focus of Kate receiving our award is her tireless efforts for choice. Kate’s efforts in recent years have been largely focused on A Fund, which she has chaired for several years; she has also organized an annual pro-choice lobbying day in Frankfort. Donna shared many memories of her experiences with Kate.

Accepting the award, Kate spoke of her commitment to choice, as well as her support for Planned Parenthood, whose services empowered her choice to not have children, giving her the time to devote to causes near to her heart. Presenting her with the Rev. Gil Schroerlucke Reproductive Justice Award (a crystal clock with engraving) was KRCRC Board chair Carol Savkovich.

KRCRC Board members provided a festive spread of appetizers and desserts.

Derick Selnick, director of the Kentucky ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project, introduced State Representatives Mary Lou Marzian and Joni Jenkins. The two representatives shared entertaining stories of working around Frankfort’s “Good Ol’ Boys” system to safeguard our reproductive freedoms. Mary Lou and Joni vowed to keep the fight going, even though it might get harder in the coming year.

Carol introduced Honi Goldman, chair of the Reproductive Rights for Kentucky (RRFKY) PAC (rrfky.org), and encouraged attendees to help the PAC in its efforts to elect pro-choice politicians in Kentucky.

Attendees were treated to delicious appetizers and desserts, provided by the KRCRC Board members, as well as a selection of wines and other beverages. A fun multi-item raffle added to the festivities; our thanks to all who donated raffle items.

And thank you again to all who attended and all who donated to Luminaria to help KRCRC fight for reproductive freedom in Kentucky!



Board member Rev. Millie Peters, below, delivered an invocation.



At left, the Highland Community Campus was the venue for Luminaria.

Above, Board member Ann Allen and Treasurer Laurie Kaplin staffed the check-in table.



At left, Rev. Donna Morton introduced Kate Cunningham, below, recipient of KRCRC's Rev. Gil Schroerlucke Reproductive Justice Award.



Derek Selznick, director of ACLU's Reproductive Freedom Project, introduced Kentucky Reps. Mary Lou Marzian and Joni Jenkins.



A multi-item raffle contributed to the evening's festivities.

Near right, Cassandra C. looks over raffle items.

Far right, Board member Jenn Bowers draws a winning ticket from basket held by Board chair Carol Savkovich.



Recipient of 2015's Rev. Gil Schroerlucke Reproductive Justice Award

Kate Cunningham: Making Connections

By Ann Allen, KRCRC Board

When asked what inspired her career as a full-time volunteer, Kate Cunningham gives much of the credit to her teachers in Louisville's Catholic elementary schools, Presentation Academy and Spalding College. "The nuns taught me to think for myself," she recalls, and also demonstrated that women could be effective leaders. She adds that the Catholic hierarchy would have disapproved of many decisions that have shaped her adult life.

Kate began her professional career as a social worker and as the Executive Director of Kentucky Civil Liberties Union. After graduating from law school, she worked as a lawyer for the Legal Aid Society and the United Auto Workers. Even during her working years, Kate was an active volunteer who donated her time and energy to such groups as the anti-Vietnam war movement and the Kentucky Women's Political Caucus. In 1969, her role in a protest against the Vietnam War landed her in jail.

When Kate retired from her legal practice in 1996, she devoted herself to working for social justice—as she puts it, to “giving back to the community.” Teaching English as a second language, donating one day a week to Habitat for Humanity, recording textbooks for the blind, and working in political campaigns, have been among her contributions.

In 1998, Kate joined the board of A Fund, a group that funds abortions for women who cannot afford them otherwise. She became President of the Board in 2013. Kate developed her views on reproductive rights by making connections among her many social and political concerns. As a member of the Sierra Club, she became aware that overpopulation was a threat to the natural and social environment. The control of human fertility seemed to her to be as important to the welfare of the planet as a whole as to that of individual parents and children. An essential precondition for fertility control is gender equality, she says, for women must see themselves as “moral agents” who exercise self-determination in all areas of life.

Kate remembers the early days of A Fund, when Betty Brown, Bob Horner and other founders awarded grants to individual women, who often called at all times of the day and night. A Fund later changed its procedure and now sends block grants to clinics—some of which are in other states-- that serve Kentucky women.

Kate insists that preventing unwanted pregnancies is much better than terminating them. She joins other supporters of reproductive rights in calling for universal access to



Kate Cunningham and Carol Savkovich, KRCRC Board Chair

comprehensive sex education and a wide range of affordable contraceptive methods. Advocates of these goals work against strong political opposition. Often, only two votes in the Health and Welfare Committee of the Kentucky State Legislature prevent the passing of measures that would further restrict Kentuckians' reproductive rights. Though disheartened by the current efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, Kate is moderately hopeful that a new generation of legislators will realize how important it is that every child be a wanted child. We are fortunate to have Kate as a leader in our struggle.

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Escorts *Cont. from page 3.*

Of course we will keep doing lots of other things too, like adapting to changes as they come our way and doing our best to not make assumptions about folks we see on the sidewalk. Most importantly, just like the clinic staff has promised, we will keep showing up.

To learn more about escorting, go to <http://everysaturdaymorning.net/> and click on “How to get involved,” or contact Meg Stern at everysaturdaymorning@gmail.com.

End-of-Year Mailing Puts Volunteers, Board Members to Work

Our thanks to volunteers Anne and Mel M., Ann C., Louis M., and Linda S. who helped the KRCRC board members get a mailing out in November.



At left, Linda S. and Board chair Carol Savkovich



Hard at work: from left, Anne M., Ann C., Board member Fran W., Mel M., and Board members Laurie K. and Debbie F.

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= \$\$\$ for KRCRC!

Helping KRCRC Through Your Kroger Card

Do you shop at Kroger, with a Kroger Plus card? You can be giving KRCRC a financial boost at *no* cost to you! (And we can use the help!)

Kroger's "Community Rewards" program returns a small part of every dollar you spend at Kroger (including at the gas tank) to KRCRC. All you have to do is

- ★ Sign up, designating KRCRC as your charity of choice, and
- ★ Use your Kroger card as usual all year!

NOTE – if you had signed up before (for KRCRC or any other organization), your prior Kroger charity designation expired in August. Kroger requires that you **RE-ENROLL** for the coming year.

Here's how to enroll (or re-enroll):

1. Sign up for a Kroger Plus Card. If you already have a Kroger Plus Card then proceed to step two.
2. Go to <https://www.kroger.com/communityrewards> and sign in or create your account.
3. Scroll down to "Community Rewards" and click "Enroll".
4. Search for "KRCRC" or enter "11048" (without the quotes). Select the button next to KRCRC and then click "Enroll".
5. Shop!

Please take a couple of minutes NOW to sign up to help KRCRC for the coming year, so we can continue our pro-choice work in Kentucky!



**Kentucky Religious Coalition
for Reproductive Choice
PO Box 4065
Louisville, KY 40204**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Religious Community in Support of an Individual's Right to Choose!



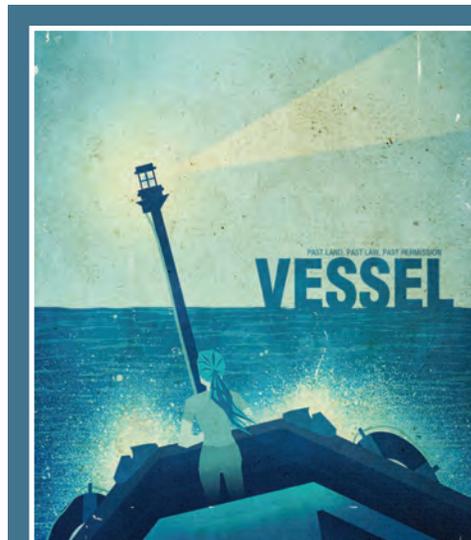
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Coming January 24:

VESSEL

Film & Discussion

Details on Cover!