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Inform - A Quarterly Newsletter for Maine Women (Spring 1991)

The Maine Commission for Women Staff

The Maine Commission for Women

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SPRING 1991

The following Legal Rights Fact Sheets are available free from the Maine Commission for Women.

Education Discrimination
Divorce - Property Settlement
Pay Equity
Employment - Maternity Rights
Housing
Employment - Sexual Harassment
Employment - Discrimination in Hiring and
Promotion

Call our office at 289-3417 or write to SHS
93, Augusta, ME 04333.

1991 Women's History Month

Almost 400 Women's History Month packets were distributed to school librarians and teachers this year. We regret, due to decreasing funding, that the MCW was unable to sponsor the Student Essay and Drawing Competition this year. We were pleased to hear that many teachers have supported Women's History Month with classroom projects and programs. Encouraging the incorporation of women into the school curriculum continues to be a priority for the Commission. It is important that students have female role models to help raise aspirations and self-esteem for female students and promote gender equity in the home, school, and workplace. For all those interested in and working on Women's History projects - keep up the good work and let us know what you are doing.

Congresswomen Snowe (Maine) and Schroeder (Colorado), co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues can provide periodic federal legislative updates. Please call within state 1-800-432-1599 or write: Rep. Snowe, 2464 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-1902 or Rep. Schroeder, 2208 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

The Maine Commission for women will be happy to answer any questions you may have on women's issues or refer you to the appropriate agency or organization. We receive calls on various subjects, including:

- medical attention received during pregnancy
- sexual harassment
- ideas and resources for starting a business
- self-help group for women who have surrendered children for adoption
- Family Medical Leave
- bill collectors trying to collect payment through harassment for bills not owed
- organizing a group for divorced men
- federal grants for women buying homes
- speaker on aspirations for high school students
- statistics on women elected to public office
- parental consent legislation
- domestic abuse laws for Maine
- general assistance

Cynthia Langevin, Ph.D., Executive Director
 Debora H. Noone, Asst. to Exec. Director
 Cynthia Masiero, Clerk Typist

1991 Commissioners

Rae Bates - 1990-1992	Patten
Sue Ellen Bordwell - 1990-1992	Yarmouth
Patti Bourgojn - 1989-1991	Augusta
Lynda Clyve - 1990-1992	Bangor
Diane Benoit Deering - 1989-1991	Hollis
Caroline Gentile - 1990-1992	Presque Isle
Ellen Golden - 1989-1991	Wiscasset
Bonnie Haghkerdar - 1990-1992	Bangor
Anne S. Heimann - Chair - 1990-1992	Yarmouth
Marion A. Higgins - 1989-1991	Presque Isle
Sharon Libby Jones - 1990-1992	Greenville
Jo Karr - 1989-1991	Kittery Point
Betsy Levenson - 1989-1991	Portland
Theresa Mudgett - 1989-1991	Milo
Patsy Wiggins O'Meara - Vice Chair	
1990-1992	South Portland
Geri F. Reed - 1990-1992	Orr's Island
Severn Towl - 1989-1991	Waterville

REGIONAL COMMISSION MEMBERS

Eastern Regional Commission

Sue McKay, Chair	Kathryn Richards
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Julia Cote	Elizabeth Scott
Madonna Flanders	Rose Scribner
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Carol Luchetti	Keller
Vivian Massey	Penny Wilson
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Northern Regional Commission

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Paula Fowler-Kilby
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Laura Pike
Renee Shulman
Carol St. Amand

Southern Regional Commission

Helen Leddy - Chair	Meredith Hamer
Cindy Arn	Polly Meinders
Nancy Artz	Audrey Reed
Barbara Eberhardt	Dorothy Schwartz
Deborah Galarneau	

Regional Commission News

Northern Regional Commission

Chair: Martha Grant

BY THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH

The Maine Commission for Women was under the budget gun until the last minute of budget deliberations. The Commission was originally told that deappropriation of the agency would occur on March First. After this deadline passed, the debate waned on. Although we were salvaged, the breathing room is slim. The cuts to be enacted for the next biennium budget are tremendous and we will have a much more difficult job sustaining this agency in the upcoming round with Appropriations. We believe the support from you, our constituents, made the difference. If you feel strongly about maintaining the only sanctioned state agency for women, please call your representative at 1-800-423-2900 or your Senator at 6900 and express your support.

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The Northern Regional Commission held a forum, "Nurturing Tradition, Fostering Change", for Women's History Month at the Women's Center at the University of Maine, Presque Isle. The forum included workshops on "Risking", "Assimilating Feminism", "Self-Empowerment" and "Did They Remember the Ladies?" Based on attendance the forum was considered by all to be a success. Geri Reed, a Harpswell resident and a member of the Maine Commission for Women, reported on the status and activities of the Maine Commission for women. The morning's activities ended with a speak out on issues affecting women and girls in Aroostook County.

PUBLIC FORUMS HELD

The Commission is hosting a series of public forums to solicit feedback from women around the state on how proposed state budget cuts will affect services they use. Legislators and advocates from services for women are invited to hear citizen concerns. Two have been held in Lewiston and Brunswick. Several more are being planned in other areas including Sanford and Bangor. We would appreciate additional feedback. Send us your response to our survey included in this mailing.

CALENDAR

Take Back the Night - April 19 - Augusta Waterfront

Women & Social Change in the 20th Century, May 3, Ramada Inn, Portland

Sharing Common Ground - Building Alliances, May 4, Portland
Woodford's Congregational Church

Maine State Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Conference, May 16
& 17, Samoset Resort, Rockland

Sharing Responsibility for Children Through Partnership, May 22 -
24, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland

Career Development: Putting the Pieces Together, June 24 & 25,
Central Maine Technical College, Auburn
For more info on cost, etc. call MCW office at 289-3417.

Southern Regional Commission

Chair: Helen Leddy

The Southern Regional Commission has spent most of the last six months organizing Women's History Month presentations; a series of lectures and workshops on such subjects as women in advertising, investment issues for women, and exploring the "wise old woman within". Because of numerous requests, these workshop presentations will be extended into the month of April. 1991 plans will be brainstormed at the April 9 meeting.

Eastern Regional Commission

Chair: Susan McKay

The Eastern Regional Commission continues to meet with their subcommittees on Women's History, poverty, and violence against women. Plans are in the works for a fall forum. Other activities of the ERC include a Women's History Month article for the Bangor Daily News, hanging photos and providing refreshments for a Bangor Historical Society reception for an artist, and a meeting with the Spruce Run organization to brainstorm abuse issues.

STATE OF THE STATE
SURVEY

Dear Friend:

The Maine Commission for Women wants your help to assist state government's response to your needs. This is an opportunity for you to make a difference.

1. With the necessity of cutbacks in state programs, which areas would you suggest be cut deepest?
☐ education ☐ environmental ☐ transportation
☐ welfare ☐ other _____
2. If taxes have to be raised, which do you prefer?
☐ sales tax ☐ income tax ☐ property tax
☐ broadening sales tax base ☐ recreation/entertainment
☐ local option sales tax ☐ surcharge on income tax
☐ luxury sales tax on selected food items
☐ increase in luxury tax on items over \$1,000
3. Are you covered by health insurance? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, do you receive benefits for yourself? _____ your spouse? _____, dependents? _____ (number of dependents _____)
4. Is insurance provided through:
☐ your employer ☐ your spouse's employer
☐ private source ☐ state insurance program
5. Do you pay for any of the health coverage benefits?
☐ yes ☐ no. If yes, how much? _____
6. If you are not covered by health insurance, why?
☐ not offered ☐ too expensive ☐ denied due to pre-existing clause
7. Do you favor a universal health coverage plan for this state? ☐ yes ☐ no
8. Do you utilize state services aimed at women? ☐ yes
☐ no. If so, what kind? _____
9. Do you have a need for child care services? ☐ yes ☐ no
10. Is child care available through your employer? ☐ yes
☐ no
11. Does your employer have any subsidy benefits for child care if no in-house care is provided? ☐ yes ☐ no

12. a. If you are currently unemployed, do you collect unemployment benefits? ___ yes ___ no
b. If not, why not? ___ benefits exhausted ___ not qualified ___ other _____
c. Do you think unemployment benefits:
are adequate? ___ yes ___ no
should be provided for longer periods? ___ yes ___ no
should be offered to single parents who must leave employment due to lack of child care? ___ yes ___ no
13. a. Are you currently receiving AFDC benefits? ___ yes ___ no
b. What changes would you like to see in the AFDC system?
___ stricter requirements to enter system
___ mandatory work program for AFDC recipients
___ more A.S.P.I.R.E. type programs to train people to enable them to get off AFDC
___ more understanding from benefits workers
___ other _____
14. Are you aware of the Family Medical Leave Law? ___ yes ___ no
15. Would you be able to take leave in a family emergency if:
a. medical benefits were not offered? ___ yes ___ no
b. medical benefits were offered? ___ yes ___ no
c. leave was paid? ___ yes ___ no
16. Would you agree to a half-way house in your community for:
substance abusers? ___ yes ___ no
battered women? ___ yes ___ no
non-violent convicts? ___ yes ___ no
mentally ill? ___ yes ___ no
17. Would you agree to a homeless shelter in your neighborhood or community? ___ yes ___ no



MAINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

The Maine Commission for Women represents the women and girls of the State of Maine by promoting, implementing and coordinating programs that improve opportunities. Our program objectives are designed to encourage progress in the broad areas of women, work and family; the quest for equality; and the creation of a non-violent future.

The Commission is grateful for the many individuals, organizations, and employers who have, by example, opened doors and broken barriers for the women and girls of our state. By virtue of their vision and accomplishments, they enrich all our lives. The annual Progress Awards are our way of saying "Thank you".

Up to three awards will be given each year. Nominators must specify the category for which the nominee is to be considered. Categories include:

- . an individual
- . a group or organization
- . an employer

In assessing applications, the Commission will consider the uniqueness of the nominee's accomplishments, particularly as they affect any aspect of the Commission's agenda in the priority areas of women, work and family, the quest for equality, and the creation of a non-violent future.

Judges will be looking for people, organizations and businesses that have opened doors and broken barriers. Our honorees will be those who have made a qualitative difference in the lives of Maine's women and girls - for today and for the tomorrows yet to come.

Nominators should submit a brief explanation - approximately 250 words - about why the nominee qualifies. The submission of additional supporting data, including resumes and newspaper articles, is encouraged.

NOMINATION FORM
1991 PROGRESS AWARDS
MAINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Please complete one:

Individual nominee:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (Day) _____ (Eve.) _____

Group or Organization:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact person: _____

Telephone: (Day) _____ (Eve.) _____

Employer:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact person: _____

Telephone: (Day) _____ (Eve.) _____

All nominations must be received at the MCW office by May 31st, 1991. Please mail to:

Maine Commission for Women
State House Station 93
Augusta, ME 04333

Please type or print nomination. Feel free to attach supporting documents, including letters of recommendation, resume, previous honors, etc.



State House Station #93 • Augusta, Maine 04333