

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Maine Women's Publications - All

Publications

12-15-1987

Inform - A Quarterly Newsletter for Maine Women (Dec1987 - Jan 1988)

The Maine Commission for Women Staff
The Maine Commission for Women

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_women_pubs_all



Part of the [Women's History Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Staff, The Maine Commission for Women, "Inform - A Quarterly Newsletter for Maine Women (Dec1987 - Jan 1988)" (1987). *Maine Women's Publications - All*. 386.

https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_women_pubs_all/386

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine Women's Publications - All by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

St. Docs,
W 84.2
In 3
Dec 1987/
Jan. 1988
C-2

Inform

Published by The Maine Commission for Women



Patricia Bourgoine, Chair, MCW

In August, Governor John McKernan appointed Patti Bourgoine to serve as Chair of the Maine Commission for Women. Patti has been a member of the Commission for 2½ years. She lives in Gardiner and is the owner of Word Processing Consulting and Services located in Augusta. She is founder and Chairman of the Board of Maine Citizens Against Sexual Abuse. She also currently serves as First Vice President of the Maine Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, a Director of the Augusta Area Jaycees, a member of the Gardiner Planning Board, and Chairman of the Gardiner Code Review Committee.

FROM THE CHAIR

The Commission is very active and involved in improving the status of women and their families in Maine. We have three priority areas for 1987-1990:

Women, Work and Family — Child care is one of the major issues affecting families in Maine. The Commission is taking a lead role in developing policies to enhance child care in Maine.

(continued on page 2)

GREAT GAINS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 113TH, GEARING UP FOR SECOND HALF

The Maine Commission for Women was very successful in its legislative work in the first half of the 113th session. Out of 26 Legislative proposals we supported, 21 were passed and funded to some degree giving us a victory rate of 82%. More important than the numbers, however, is what was passed. Most significantly there were two major initiatives passed and funded — one for teen pregnancy and the other for child care. The teen pregnancy initiative was for 1.3 million dollars over the biennium and includes money for teacher education, health care services for prevention of unwanted pregnancy and services for pregnant and parenting teens. The Child Care initiative was for 1.6 million dollars and includes money for increased slots, salary increases, the development of six regional resource centers, consultants for business and education, and training for providers. Most importantly, child care "came into its own" as a family issue that everyone needs to be concerned about and that we must address if economic development is to take place.

In the area of welfare and job training, we were able to obtain a 2.5% increase in AFDC benefits, a significant expansion in the Welfare, Education and Training Program and increased funds for support services for women in those programs. We were also able to guarantee that people who wanted training in the JTPA program would not be refused because of dependent care needs. Displaced Homemakers also received funding for additional rural outreach.

(continued on page 2)

WOMEN CABINET MEMBERS: McKERNAN'S CHOICE

In the pre-election interviews the Commission did with gubernatorial candidates, Governor McKernan stated that he felt women were an incredibly untapped resource in the State of Maine. Further, he made a strong commitment to appointing women to policy-making positions in his Administration. True to his word, the McKernan Administration has appointed qualified women and is now in the position of having the highest percentage of women Cabinet members, Bureau Directors, and key Administrative Assistants of any Governor in the country.

This fall we had the opportunity to interview his five female Cabinet members and his Chief of Staff to find out more about them, how they came to their positions, how they like it so far, and what contributions they hope to make. It has been a wonderful process and we hope the information is useful to you.

Unfortunately, the *Inform* is not big enough to give you all that each of these women said, so we had to edit when we

(continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Interviews with Women Cabinet Members	1
Legislative News	1
Introduction to New Commissioners	8

MCW Chair . . .

(continued from page 1)

The Quest for Equality — The Commission is dedicated to maintaining the rights that have been gained in this century. As one of our initiatives, we will continue to oppose any state or federal laws that would erode current reproductive rights for women and girls in Maine.

The Creation of a Non-Violent Future — One out of 4 girls, and 1 out of 7 boys are sexually molested in Maine before reaching the age of 18. Nationally, every 18 seconds a woman is battered by a husband or boyfriend. Every year, more than a million of these women need medical help. *Every day, four die.* This violation of power and control over others must stop.

As we join together to improve the lives of women and girls in Maine, I believe it is important to remember that each of us must get involved if positive changes are to be made. Remember, *you* can make a difference in your community. Please let us know what we can do to work together to make that difference.

—Patti Bourgoi



SPEAKERS AVAILABLE!

Does your group need a dynamic speaker on issues facing Maine women? Call the Maine Commission for Women at 289-3417. Commissioners are available to speak on the Maine Commission for Women (history/current activities), state legislation, women and work, violence and abuse, civil rights and a whole host of other issues. We are available for expenses only and are anxious to share the information we have.

Legislation . . .

(continued from page 1)

In the area of violence, we were able to secure additional funding for the rape crisis centers and the Family Crisis Shelters. Funds were provided to "Looking Up", an organization for victims and survivors of incest.

The MCW worked closely with the member organizations of the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition to make these legislative gains possible. Much praise goes to the Legislature, in particular the Appropriations Committee and Leadership, for insuring that the rights of women, children, and families were protected and services were provided.

As always, there is much to be done . . . which brings us to the second half of the 113th.

The MCW will be submitting legislation that calls for family and medical leave for employees. Modeled on federal legislation that is still pending, this act makes provisions for workers to leave their jobs for up to eighteen weeks in the case of the birth, adoption, or illness of a child or spouse. The worker's benefits would be continued and the same or equivalent job would be available upon return. We are very excited about this initiative which will strengthen Maine families.

In addition to the MCW bills, it looks as though there will be a number of bills submitted including numerous child care proposals; a bill to correct inequities in the Maine State Retirement System; an AFDC increase, housing and clothing allowance and a proposal to index AFDC to the cost of living; various welfare reform proposals from the Department of Human Services; options to increase Medicaid and transitional health insurance coverage; an increase in the minimum wage; the parental consent referendum; and a wide variety of AIDS legislation.

Although it is a short session, it promises to be a very busy one for women and their families. In January, the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition will announce its legislative package and the MCW will be there. If you are interested in being involved in any of the issues mentioned above and/or would like more information, please call the MCW office.

Cabinet . . .

(continued from page 1)

really wanted you to get every word. The full manuscript of each interview is available from the Commission at your request, as are microcassette tapes of the interviews.

Many thanks to the Commissioners who gave us their time and thoughts. Congratulations and thanks also to the Governor for bringing these talented women to State Government. We're counting on you to keep up the good work.

The following are the questions we asked each of the women we interviewed. Next to each is a phrase that will appear in the text to indicate the full question.

What is your educational background? — education

What job did you hold before coming to State Government? — previous job
How were you nominated? — nominated

What special problems do you feel women face in your field? — special problems

What contributions do you hope to make while in State Government? — contributions

Do you see significant changes in the role of women in the workplace? — changes

Have you ever felt you were discriminated against? — discriminated

Do you feel women have been discriminated against in your field? — field
Who are your role models or mentors? — role models

Do you have any suggestions or "tips" for women entering your field? — tips
How do you combine work and family? — combine

Do you ever have conflicts between your private philosophies and your public views? If so, how do you resolve them? — conflicts

How can the Maine Commission for Women and your department work together? How can the Commission be of service to you? — together

Sharon Miller — Chief of Staff

I'm Chief of Staff and my job is to supervise the Governor's personal staff, but I also have a lot of responsibilities with the Cabinet. I serve as liaison — we've split the Cabinet and I have half of it and someone else has half of it. I'm responsible sort of for the organization of the interaction of the Cabinet, planning agendas, training retreats, the Cabinet relationships. As Chief of Staff, I oversee scheduling; the Cabinet meets weekly. The Governor is very interested in a team approach and very interested in Cabinet members working together on projects so there isn't duplication and overlap in maximizing resources, like on child care four or five people work so they're not missing opportunities in any sphere. So, they meet weekly and it's a real team kind of management.

education — I have a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Master's degree in International Relations from Lehigh University, so that was really what my interest was when I was in school. My career goal then was to be in the State Department; I wanted to be a career State Department employee. I got sidetracked by a man. I did not set out to do what I am doing now. This is not what I envisioned myself doing forty-five years ago.

nominated — I was co-chair of the transition team, was offered this position and took it.

special problems — I don't know that women are different in government than they are anywhere else. In fact, maybe they're even lesser in government, because in government the promotional guidelines are so fixed that I think that's provided a little more protection — also a little more restriction. Be that as it may, I really think women have to work hard, probably twice as hard to get the advancement, but that's my own personal feeling. I don't know that that's true. I really have to say that, in all the different jobs I've had, I've never really been aware of discrimination of any kind. I've never personally experienced it. And I've never been anywhere, and I've been in a lot of positions where a lot of decisions were made at the policy level, where I've even heard it discussed. I've never observed it and I'd be very sensitive to it. In fact, I've seen the opposite from this Governor. He's committed to having a really good balance of women in the administration and, in fact, a real conscious search for good women and is finding it very difficult. Those women who would be Commissioner-level ability are working or practicing for double the money the State pays and have worked very hard to reach that position and don't want to lose it. We've really worked hard. Our next focus is the Deputy Commissioner level, trying to find really talented women to bring into that level so you do have a pool when openings occur in

Commissioners. That pool was pretty tough to find. I think opportunities for women are tough to come by in any field so I think, for women, it's (State government) a really good opportunity. Some of the really strong women we interviewed were very tempted. They really liked the idea of public service; they really wanted to do it, but I think they wanted to get totally satiated in what they were doing before they were ready to feel that, yes, I've really succeeded, I've reached the top of my profession, I've been here for five or ten years — I think they wanted a few more years in what they were doing before they could step away.

contributions — One of them is good opportunities for women. I think another one is just bringing really good management team-building, real pride in their jobs for state employees, raising their pride, giving real opportunities for growth so they aren't locked into this channel or that and this is what it's going to be, but have real training for the people who work in State Government — ownership in what they do. I would like to bring really good private sector management into State Government. Even though there is no bottom line in State Government and it's not a business, that doesn't mean we can't use good management practices and systems.

combine — I think it's tough. If you're lucky enough to be married to someone who's supportive, it's not as tough as it could be. It would be impossible to be a Commissioner or to have the kind of job that I have if you didn't have a supportive husband. I couldn't do it. You have to have incredible energy and a capacity for work; you get used to using eighteen hours a day for work. Obviously, if you're doing this, you like that. If it wasn't your style, you wouldn't be doing it.

tips — I would say seize opportunities — learn everything that you see, learn to the maximum. Always be willing to do more and ask for more. It's just an attitude of wanting to do the best at whatever you do and wanting to learn it totally, then wanting to learn more kinds of things. I wish that I had had a real career because it would have been great to achieve a lot. I think if I have a regret, that's it. I would have liked to have been the very best at something, whatever it would have been. I didn't really have that opportunity. I didn't come out of high school or college with a real clear picture of what I wanted to do. I had so many interests that I just sort of clicked from thing to thing. With our moving, it would have been very frustrating. I would never raise a daughter to expect someone to take care of her. You're going to have to work even if you do get married. The economic realities are that you're probably going to have to have two people working.

together — I really would like to see a lot of interaction. We have a lot of appointments to Boards and Commissions and we're always looking for qualified candidates. We'd like to use the Commission for Women as a resource and as a policy sounding board for major initiatives on women's issues, job training, child care, welfare reform, a whole host of things. There is a real commitment to jobs and opportunities for women in this administration. We started out with five women as Commissioners and we would have had more, if we could have found them. I don't think we've gotten credit the credit we should have gotten for the number of women appointed to the Cabinet and to Deputy Commissioner level.



**Jean Mattimore —
Commissioner,
Dept. of Finance**

I can tell you functionally; then I can describe a little bit of what's behind the organization chart. The Department of Finance is the centrally fiscal manager for State Government. We have a diverse set of functions; in fact, about 95% of the State's revenue clears through this department, through one of our operations. We have the Bureau of the Budget that's responsible for revenue projections and reporting and also for preparation of the State budget; it involves probably the heaviest connection with the Legislature that we've had in the short time I've been here, because of moving the budget through. We have the Bureau of Accounts and Controls which is the State Controller and they are responsible for payment of checks, for payroll, and for all of the accounting functions related in state government as they are collected at the state government level. They are also responsible for fiscal financial audits, external audits, for essentially keeping state government's books in terms of cash flow, balance sheets, profit/loss statements. They're kind of the accountant for state government. Then we have the Bureau of Taxation which is a very large operation. They really support the policy created by the Legislature — they implement all the tax laws within the state and administer that law.

From a personal point of view, this job is fascinating because I get to spend time in different areas. I think the similarities between the private sector and State government are becoming more clear and more obvious, as well as the differences.

education — I went to a small women's college in Boston, Simmons College. I stayed there through a Master's Degree in English Literature, 18th century English drama of all things! Then I went to work at the University of New Hampshire in Durham. I did a little bit of teaching at Simmons, then I went to UNH and did a little teaching there, primarily as part of an administrative job. I decided that what I did want to do was go into business. There I was with an intensive academic career, trying to figure out how to market that. So, I went into academic administration to get some practical experience to bridge my experiences. After a few years, I went from academic administration to personnel work, which had some connection. Then, I decided to come to Portland instead of Boston and was interviewed by more people than I probably should ever have been. . . obviously, things were slower then. One of the places was Union Mutual. They had an opening for a paralegal, which was not something I had any training or experience in, but they seemed to feel that there was enough of a connection between academic work and the job they had open. So, I did that for a year and then moved into management. While I was in the early years of that, they sent me back to an executive program at Northeastern.

previous job — Before coming to state government, I was an officer in the Individual Disability Division at UNUM.

nominated — The Governor had a transition team which included someone that I knew from my work experience who called me one day and asked me if I wanted to talk about it. I said "sure, what an incredibly flattering thing to make it onto your list." So, I talked to him and the rest is history; it all happened very quickly.

special problems — I would have to preface that by saying that I have had the luxury, I guess, of not having to feel as if I've been hampered personally. Having most of my work experience at a company which was in a posture of promoting women, putting them into senior management positions, never having equal pay issues that I recall, really has been a terrific situation for me. Some of the special problems I think women increasingly face are child care, flexible work time, and a need to accommodate a historical sociological role with a very new and rapidly changing sociological role. It's a bind. It can create a conflict for individuals as they try to sort out what those responsibilities are and what the priorities are. Judging from the frequency at which the Commission for Women talks to them, employers are also grappling with that in a way that they never had to before or didn't perceive that they had to. Clearly, self-interest ultimately makes the best changes in any kind of social situation. I think

we're getting to the point where it is becoming clearer and clearer to people that women are a workforce to be accommodated.

contributions — I would like to be able to deliver on the reason that I was hired, which was to try to bring skills and perspective from the private sector and shape and mold those and apply them in the public sector. The Governor himself is very much oriented to planning, priority setting, sound fiscal management.

The way we manage our financial environment is very healthy right now; it's in really good shape. If we can just tweak that and make it in even better shape, that would be great.

changes — I think we're seeing, certainly in the Cabinet configuration, a fairly significant number of women in senior management. When you look at next tier down, you probably also are seeing an increase in the number of women in those positions. That says a lot, first of all, about the Governor's willingness not just to accept but to seek out qualified women. I think the people who work with him also are doing that; once again, self-interest takes over and qualified people who can get things done are the type of people you want around. This is an opportunity for women who may not be in the public sector or who may not always want to be committed to the public sector to come in and do something of value at a managerial level as part of a broad based experience. If you think in terms of careers instead of jobs, which is something that has always been the hue and cry that women don't, you can see this very easily as an important slice of a long term professional development; this is not just for formal jobs, but also when you're asked or approached to serve on a committee or commission or even to run for the Legislature, that you do have the confidence to do that as a way not only to make a contribution but as a way to develop some of your own skills.

tips — I'd say take advantage of opportunities and not just when they're presented, but seek them out. Be willing to hold your hand up.

Things are so dynamic that I don't know if you can plan a career path. There's a certain amount of contrived happenstance that people ought to take advantage of. You train yourself, you're good at your job, and you're alert to the kinds of possibilities that this can lead to. In the "be at the right place in the right time", there's an element of personal skill involved. A lot of people are in the right place at the right time, they just don't know it. I think that people should look around at their needs and wants and be willing to pay the price, in terms of training and preparation, and then be willing to just go after that.

**Nancy Kobritz —
Commissioner,
Div. of Community
Services**



The Division of Community Services is an agency whose primary purpose is to assure that low income people, elderly and handicapped, have access to the skills necessary to obtain self-sufficiency. That, in essence, is the purpose and intent of the Community Services Act. The Division is basically a conduit for passing 48 million dollars through to all the Community Action Programs (CAPs) statewide and we manage and monitor, through those agencies, four major programs: the Weatherization program, Fuel Assistance, Temporary Food Assistance, and Head Start. In addition, the Division is the ombudsman for the Governor's office, so we have a citizen's assistance line here (1-800-452-4617). We also are going to be establishing the Governor's new Office of Volunteerism.

education — I'm a pediatric nurse practitioner. I have an Associate Degree in nursing and I'm currently a B.S. student in nursing. I have a B.S. in Health Care and Administration. I've practiced in pediatrics for the last fourteen years. While I was at the Eastern Maine Medical Center, I also developed programs for the pediatrics department and directed a rural pediatric health program.

previous job — I founded the Rural Pediatric Health Program, which is now run through Eastern Maine Medical Center; I directed that for fourteen years.

nominated — I had been doing some work with the McKernan for Governor campaign and I assisted the Governor on children's issues and on issues of the poor, especially rural poor. The Governor, who at that time was a Congressman, was very interested in rural poverty. When you look at the statistics in Maine, you see that 13% of the people in Maine are living below the poverty line and 12-15% are bordering on the line. He was very sensitive to those statistics and was exploring a lot of different options at that time, in terms of when he became Governor what kinds of programs he would be instituting. When he became Governor, he gave me a call and asked me if I'd like to direct the Division of Community Services.

special problems for the clients served who are women — The feminization of poverty is a major issue and women as single heads of households is a major issue. I think that in many ways women are different and I think that one of those characteristics and

differences is that women do have an inner strength and have a woman's intuition. With those two characteristics, I think that it's natural for women to want to get out and work and make it on their own. There are many barriers preventing women from that natural progression. Number one is obvious, it's day care. Number two is jobs and the skills and training necessary to apply and succeed in what jobs are available for women. I think that it's going to be a very exciting time with this new administration, because the Governor is also very sensitive and very much aware of these issues. With the economic development and human resources development initiatives, hopefully these barriers are going to be removed at the state level. I really hope that we don't miss the boat on this.

contributions — My major goal is to re-establish the purpose and intent of the Community Services Act. A second goal is to be sure that we maximize the federal dollars so that more money is going out to low income people and less being spent on administration of those programs. A third goal is to streamline our programs so indeed they're running as efficiently as they can. I think we've got to, in a broader sense, look at the programs the Division is currently running to ensure access to the skills necessary to ensure self-sufficiency. We're going to seize the opportunity there too, in terms of the Governor's initiatives and we're going to play a very key role with the C.A.P. (Community Action Program) agencies in helping to address on the job training.

discriminated — I have personally never been discriminated against, at least not to my knowledge. I think that women are human and that, as humans, we're all at some point subjected to discrimination whether we're black, white, tall, short, fat, wear glasses, whatever. I'm having a difficult time answering that question because I may have been discriminated against many times and just not realized it because when I don't get what I want or succeed where I want to succeed, I don't stop and think, "Well, it's because I'm a woman." The biggest barrier to women today is the fact that they think they're women and that's why they aren't able to get from point A to point B. It's so important that as women recognize we're going to fail sometimes — not everyone's going to succeed at what we want to do — you've got to set your sights, you've got to decide what you want to do, who you want to be, you've got to get the proper educational experience, you've got to go for it.

tips — I think when people come to state government, they come because they think they have something to offer, that they indeed can make a difference, and that they basically want to help people. I think it's really important that

when you do come to state government and if you are an appointee of the Governor, it's important that you do believe in his or her philosophies and goals for state government. Don't just take the position because you want the position. You're here to carry out the Governor's messages, his philosophies, and his agenda. It's very important that you agree with that agenda because if you don't, you're not going to be very happy and you're not going to be directing the state in the way the Governor wants it to go. Another point is that it's really important that you have your feet planted squarely on the ground. There are so many people who are bleeding hearts and just want to do good and just want to believe. Those kinds of people do a lot more harm to low income people or whatever target group they're looking to help. It's so important that you are able to put things in perspective and be a champion of the low income or whatever group you're advocating for, but do it in such a way that you can develop strategies and policy changes that are going to affect low income people positively. Another key point is that we need to realize that whatever you do for low income people, the elderly, the handicapped, you have got to realize that you have to afford them respect.

Susan Parker — Commissioner, Mental Health and Retardation



education — "The best education is often not in school." Elementary school in East Millinocket; high school in both East Millinocket and Montpelier, VT; Bachelor of Science from University of Vermont; Masters in Social Planning from Boston College; basic and advanced EMT certificates; in first graduating class of the EMT program at Dartmouth Medical School; some graduate seminar work in Advanced English and Literature (French and English Literature major); extra academic work in specialized planning seminars.

previous job — Executive Director of the NH Developmental Disabilities Council (7 years); 2 years at the Grafton County Human Services Council.

nominated — I did not apply — I got a call from a key member of Governor McKernan's transition team, a gentle-

man by the name of David Stanley. He was calling to ask some basic questions about different ways to go in Mental Health policy for the state and what kind of opinions did I have about that. Could I come up and talk to him about how maybe the state of Maine could think about Mental Health policy and people to fill certain positions. I really had no intention of applying for the job, but it went from there and the rest is history. That was on something like May 12th and, by the end of May, I was nominated. Good chemistry.

special problems — That's a tough one. I'm not sure that women can be singled out as facing special problems but I think women as a group have pressures on them that perhaps men don't have. The traditional role has been child care; the traditional role has been keeping the home fires burning. Very often now the role is the necessity of becoming the major breadwinner for the family, so I think that while the tasks haven't gotten smaller, the challenge has become to try to balance it all. I think that is something that is quite tough and that child care is probably a major issue, as well as how to cope with the stress and resulting lack of personal time to develop oneself in the different enrichment areas.

contributions — Put together the templates of a well-managed system, using the promise that the quality of service is directly in relationship to the quality of management.

tips — Sure. A high, high degree of organization; I understood long ago the value of time — how to get things done pretty quickly. I tend to cluster different tasks of a similar nature. I don't make two trips when I only have time to make one. But, I also am willing to work quite a few hours a day. I've always gone home after work and cooked dinner and done everything that one needs to do in order to keep a home going and kids in school and moderately well-adjusted. I have two boys — they're almost seventeen and almost nineteen.

role models — No one you know, probably, but this wonderful woman, who was among the first graduates of the New York School of Social Workers and she's currently, I think, around eighty years old and she hired me for my first job out of graduate school. She currently lives in Norwich, Vermont and she has a long history of being involved as a psychiatric social worker, working with youth. She is one of the wisest women I have ever known. Her name is Emily Gould. She works in Westchester and she is very, very capable. In fact, she was New Hampshire's Volunteer of the Year a couple of years ago. She just always understands where the issues are and what needs to be done.

Have you ever felt you were discriminated against? Never.

tips — Be willing to work very hard and always understand what your field is and, particularly, what it is you don't know. Know that first and don't be afraid to say, "Gee, I really don't know the answer to that, but I'll find out." I think for women in particular if there is more allegiance to the role without substance, they're gone. You really have to know your content, know how to apply it, and have a lot of inner strength and set yourself up for regular and kind of systematic challenges. Don't succumb to what I call backbiting; be open and direct. I think, in order to be that way, it's almost implicit that there be a high degree of self-confidence, however one gets to that place where self confidence is a fact of how you do your job and how you live your life. It's an issue of confidence and preparation and the desire to work hard and to understand the true nature of conflicts and to seek their resolution. In any stewardship role in the public sector, the forces are so great, in terms of whom you have to be answerable to, that one answer is not sufficient for all constituencies. You have to understand the motivations of the Legislative branch and members of the Executive branch. You have to be clear to whom you're accountable and why and have enough preparation and consequent self-confidence such that you don't need to overstate your case."

Eve Bither — *Commissioner, Educational and Cultural Services*



job — The Department of Educational and Cultural Services has three Educational Bureaus and four Cultural Bureaus. The Educational Bureaus are the Bureau of School Management, the Bureau of Instruction, and the Bureau of Vocational and Adult Education. I'm also responsible for the State Library, the State Museum, the Arts Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission. We have about 520 employees. I have a Deputy and an Assistant, in addition to seven Bureau Chiefs, a legislative aide, a Division Director for the Division of Finance and one for the Division of Management and Data — that's it, along with 200,000 kids and a budget of close to \$700 million.

education — I was educated in Europe. I graduated from a gymnasium in one of the cities adjacent to Frankfurt, Germany. I was born actually in the German part of Czechoslovakia but we were refugees to Germany after the war. I graduated as valedictorian of my class and attended the University of Frankfurt for one semester. Then, I won a Fulbright scholarship for my junior year at Smith. I majored in chemistry and minored in physics. I was married and I dropped out of college. When our youngest daughter entered the first grade, I went back to school to get a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. Two years ago, I started a doctoral program at Boston University. I'm all done with all my course work, I passed the comprehensives, and the only thing that's missing now is the dissertation. One of my professors wants me to do it on our strategic planning process in Maine.

previous job — I taught physics for five years at Deering High School. That was a very positive job because I had excellent students. I could have stayed there forever, but it was getting too easy. I was an Assistant Principal in Portland for three years, which is the required number of years in order to get a superintendent's license (you need five years of teaching and three years in administration). I became Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education in Portland. I was in charge of Portland and Deering High Schools, the Vocational School, the three middle schools, instrumental music grades 3-12, alternative programs K-12, positive action, and affirmative action, among other things. Then I applied for the Superintendency in Westbrook and did not get that, but I applied for the Superintendency in Freeport, got that and was there for two years. I had met the Governor when he was a Congressman, while I was still working in Portland. We had worked on several policy reports for the school board with him. I had a call the week before Thanksgiving. I felt no hesitancy about taking this job.

special problems — I think education is still predominantly a male occupation on the administrative level. According to statistics, more than 80% of all teachers are women and more than 90% of the high school principals are men. We have about 160 superintendents in the state and only five are women. I see changes happening. More women are becoming interested in administration and I certainly try to encourage them. Whenever I talk to a group of women teachers, I say get your principal's certificate. We have fewer than twenty women in this state who hold superintendent's certificates and that's the crucial gate you have to go through. I think the reason there are so few is because one of the components is an internship with a practicing superintendent, which is just beginning to be

encouraged for women. I think that Maine school management and the individual superintendents are very concerned about the fact that the number of highly qualified applicants is declining. The obvious answer is to get more women into it. I can say that because I was a woman superintendent and in that sense I have credibility. They know that I've been there.

contributions — Most of the goals that I have are sort of out there already. I want to have Maine recognized for the considerable achievements that we have made in education. Our accomplishments are a well-kept secret. I want to raise the aspirations of students and adults in this state. We have much to be proud of and I don't think we aspire as much as we could. We have various initiatives to do that. I would like to assure a supply of adequately prepared and well qualified teachers and administrators. I want the performance of students to be the bottom line of everything that we do. I would like to have Maine be the top state in the number of students who graduate from high school. Our high school graduation rate is 78% and the national average is 72%. We're about 19th in the whole country. We send on to higher education only about 49% of high school students; the national average is about 57%. We also find that the people who are coming back to adult education classes to get a GED or a diploma are younger. It used to be that it was women over age 35 who would go back for those degrees. We find now that it's young people between the ages of 20 and 25 who go out to work for a year or two and find that they have to have more education. Two major stumbling blocks of adult education are child care and transportation. We're working on that. The other major thrust needs to be early childhood education.

changes — I think the higher number of women in the workplace is one significant change. The greatest difficulty I see young women experiencing is the sense they have that in order to be productive, they have to have both a job and a family. Women really need to get comfortable with the fact that it's perfectly okay to stay home. Women need to feel free to go to work and be married or go to work and not be married, to have children or not have children. That's the idea.

discriminated — No. I wouldn't allow it! I guess I've always been used to being in a male-dominated situation, like physics. I used to go to summer institutes with 43 people and maybe two women. I was the first woman bank president of a commercial bank in this state.

field? — I have no actual sense of deliberate discrimination, but the kind of active encouragement women look for hasn't been as forthcoming.

tips — Get as much formal education as you possibly can, as fast as you can, in as diverse a number of fields as you possibly can. Get all the certificates as fast as you can; produce something outstanding that you can point to as your achievement, something for which others will give you credit, like a report, a task force, a curriculum effort, or participation on a national or state level committee. Something that makes you different.

combine — By doing it sequentially, rather at the same time. I think you have to have a very supportive partner. My husband is extremely supportive. He was a veterinarian and for the first fifteen years of our marriage, I raised the kids. I was the one who always went to swimming lessons, riding lessons, music lessons, all that. He worked eighteen or twenty hours a day and made a cameo appearance every once in a while, but we always tried to have dinner together. He has since sold his practice. He has been very supportive of me — I could not have this crazy schedule without a husband who is supportive.

Susan Collins —
Commissioner,
Professional and
Financial
Regulation



job — I am the chief administrative official of this department. I am responsible for personnel, the budget, space problems, overall policies. I serve as a member of the Governor's Cabinet, as well as a member of the Cabinet Council on AIDS. I supervise the Superintendents who run the Bureaus in the Department, that's the Bureau of Insurance, the Bureau of Banking, the Bureau of Consumer Credit Protection, the Securities Division, and 29 professional and occupational licensing, ranging from acupuncturists to veterinarians. I've learned a lot about licensing electricians and plumbers!

The Real Estate Commission is the final large entity that is within this Department. So, a lot of my job is coordinating the efforts of these very diverse Bureaus and Boards that have been put under this umbrella agency and that is a big job.

education — I'm a graduate of Caribou High School; I grew up in Caribou. I went to St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York. I have a BA degree in government in St. Lawrence.

previous job — I worked for almost twelve years for Senator Bill Cohen. I worked for him when he was in the House, then when he was in the Senate. My most recent job for him was as Staff

Director of the Senate Subcommittee of which he was the Chairman — the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management.

nominated — I was approached by various people who were close to the Governor or had worked for him or supported him to see whether I might be interested in a position. It was at a good time for me because the Republicans had just lost control of the Senate and that meant my job would have been demoted substantially. While I loved living in Washington and loved working for Bill Cohen, I'd done it for a long time. Really, I was at the point where a change was something I was looking forward to. That combined with the loss in the Senate and my longtime desire to return to Maine and my wanting to work for Gov. McKernan. It really all came together at the same time very well. It was Sharon Miller who called me and asked me to come up for an interview, on about two days notice. It all happened very fast.

special problems — The kinds of occupations and businesses regulated by my department have been predominantly male-oriented in the past, for example there is one acting CEO of a Maine financial institution that I'm aware of and that's it. The Insurance field, traditionally appears to me to be very male-oriented at the top levels. A lot of insurance agents are women and a lot of the support staff and the people out getting the business are women, but I can only think of one woman who's an owner of an agency. So, I think it is changing and I think it is getting better, but those industries seem to be sort of long time bastions of male control. Similarly, most of the electricians, plumbers, oil and solid fuel technicians licensed by this Department are males. The social workers tend to be females. You can see that it breaks down. There's a lot of growth left for women in those areas and, where women have made strides in Government and in the regulatory part of Government, I don't see it yet reflected in the industry regulated by Government. But, I think it's changing — I think it's getting better. As far as the representation of women on Boards — in looking over the nominations that have been made by this Governor, he has been very careful and has tried very hard to up the number of women on Boards and that is certainly a goal of his, to have more equal representation. The Governor is very committed to increasing the role of women, as is obvious by my position.

contributions — The first goal is to try to get the Workers' Compensation system back on track. If I accomplish that with the help of the Governor, everything else pales by comparison! Secondly, I want to do a lot with this Department to improve its response to consumers. I see the purpose of regulations as being to protect the public.

As far as broader goals I'm relating

to my department, I'm very interested in the issues during the campaign about the two Maines and trying to bring economic prosperity and opportunity to Northern Maine, having come from Aroostook; that is an issue that is very dear to my heart and that I'm really committed to. I'm also very interested in the whole AIDS issue and am glad to be appointed to that Cabinet council because I think that's really a major public health threat and problem in our state. The policies have to be really carefully thought out and that we not be behind the eight ball. Fortunately, there was a good start on it in the Brennan administration. I think that Maine is way ahead of a lot of other states.

changes — It's certainly a very high priority with this governor; there was a definite effort to recruit women, in a far more aggressive way than I've seen in the past watching State government. I think that's to the Governor's great credit. It seems to me government is one of the ways for women to advance and that government is much more receptive to putting women in management roles. I view that very positively. For one thing, I love working in government but, also, it seems to me that if we start training women to be managers through State government then we're preparing them to do private sector management jobs. It'll be more accepted because they'll already have management training. I see that as being one change — more women in government in management positions, thus the private sector is more receptive to hiring because of the stature or experience. I also see women going more into non-traditional occupations in the trades area and I see that as a very positive sign.

tips — I think the best way is to realize that you may have to start at a lower level than your skills and intelligence may indicate. But that, if you make yourself invaluable, you can work your way up — in any organization that's a fair organization. (I've been lucky; I've always worked in ones that were fair.) I also think that women should not be afraid to use all their skills. For example, if you're an excellent typist, that may well get you in the door to a position that may lead to a management position. The caution there is to make sure you don't get stuck in a job that is dead end and to make sure that you are always setting yourself up for promotions or to move. If you don't move up, you have to leave. You have to push yourself to make sure that you're not just the good person that makes the office run smoothly and never is recognized for it. I think you have to be indispensable but aggressive. It's an odd combination.

— I don't know that I agree that women have to be twice as good as men, as you frequently hear. I just think that they've got to be as good and a bit aggressive at times.

WELCOME TO THE NEW COMMISSIONERS!

Elizabeth P. Levenson,
Vice Chair, Portland

"My understanding of the importance of working to enhance the status of women came incrementally, just as redress of inequities will come little by little. I have chosen to become part of the process because I believe there is much to be done, and the time has come for women from all walks of life to join together to claim the very basic rights of equity and equality of opportunity."

Currently, Betsy Levenson is the Assistant Director of the graduate program in Public Policy and Management at the University of Southern Maine and the Associate Director of Curriculum and Operations at the Community Leadership Institute. Her work history includes Consultant, Maine Civil Liberties Union; Consultant, McKernan for Governor campaign; Political Director, Cohen for Senator; and Special Projects Consultant, Cumberland County Training Resource Center. The Maine Commission for Women welcomes the diversity that Ms. Levenson brings as our new Vice Chair.

Diane Benoit Deering, Hollis

"I am honored to be a member of the Maine Commission for Women. As a member from Maine's southern-most area, I look forward to promoting the work of the Commission throughout York County."

Diane Benoit Deering is a resident of Hollis and works locally in property management. Ms. Deering received her B.A. in History and Government at the University of New Hampshire in 1967. She brings experience with youth to the Commission through her involvement with the Kennebec Girl Scout Council and the Hollis Parent Teachers Club.

Ms. Deering's past work experience has included Youth Director for the East Congregational Church in Milton, MA; Dean of Women at the South Shore Congregational Camp Conference at Geneva Point Center, NH; Assistant to the Treasurer and Teller at the Milton Savings Bank in Milton, MA; and Technical Assistant in Admissions at Hartford Junior Community College in Bel Air, MD. Ms. Deering has a deep commitment to Maine and is a valuable addition to the Maine Commission for Women.

Marion A. Higgins, Presque Isle

"My appointment to the Maine Commission for Women by Governor McKernan constitutes an honor and a challenge. I hope to contribute to the Commission from the somewhat unique perspective of the Aroostook County woman. In addition, the opportunity to directly participate in the formation of regional commissions makes this an exciting, historic time to be involved."

Marion Higgins has been District Office Manager for Congresswoman Olympia J. Snowe since 1981. She has been active in the field of women's rights since 1973, establishing a women's network first in Sacramento and then in Presque Isle in 1984. Ms. Higgins is presently Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Aroostook Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, an active member of Pioneer Playhouse of the University of Maine at Presque Isle, a graduate of the Presque Isle Leadership Program, and is one of the first women admitted to the Kiwanis Club of Presque Isle.

Formerly a part-time staff writer for Travelhost Magazine in Sacramento, Ms. Higgins has recently written a children's book for very young children of alcoholics, with publication in discussion pending completion of illustrations. The Maine Commission for Women will benefit greatly from Ms. Higgins' involvement.

MAINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
STATE HOUSE STATION 93
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

Elaine Stanley
#64