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The Maine Commission for Women

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Inform

Published by The Maine Commission for Women

FROM THE CHAIR

This issue of the Inform highlights legislative activities for the coming session. The Commission will continue to work with the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition (WLAC) on legislation which will improve the lives of women and girls in Maine. It is exciting to know that with our last election women now represent 31% of Maine's legislature, up from 28% in the previous election. Nationally, we have one of the highest percentages of women. The Commission is also very proud to have one of its members elected to serve Maine citizens—Mary Cathcart from Orono will represent District 129 in the House in the coming session.

The members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor (9 members), the President of the Senate (4 members), and the Speaker of the House (4 members). Several new members have recently been appointed to the Commission—Linda Card from Portland, Julie Norton Cashwell from Vassalboro, Lynda Clyve from Bangor, Anne Stickney Heimann from Portland, Brenda Humphrey from Portland, Rena Murphy from Millinocket, and Myrtle Willey from Gardiner. We are very pleased to have such talented, committed individuals join our Commission. All of the members of the Commission are highlighted in this issue.

At the recent New England Regional Conference of Commission's for Women Professor Ronnie Steinberg from Temple University spoke about pay equity. She gave an excellent overview of the past ten years of working for pay equity, the strides we have made, and how far we still must go to achieve equality. A summary of her speech is included.

Please note for your calendars that the Annual Meeting of the Commission will be held on June 16, 1989 and we will be sending information about the meeting and asking for nominations for our Annual

Progress Awards in the next issue. The Commission will hold our next Annual Legislative Day on March 7, see registration form inside. We hope many of you will be able to attend.

—Patricia C. Bourgoin

MAKING OUR PRESENCE FELT WHERE IT COUNTS!

On March 7th, the most prominent women's organizations in Maine will combine to produce a program for women at the legislature called "We The People: Women's Day at the Legislature". The purpose of the day is to give women detailed knowledge of the legislative process and how they may successfully strategize political initiatives. A major focus will be the legislative programs of the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition and how women may become involved in the work of political organization around deeply felt issues.

In addition to workshops on the hottest political issues, there will also be a Blaine House reception honoring women legislators and policy makers to which all are invited. For further details see program and registration form on page 2.

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Women's Legislative Agenda Established for 114th

The Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition is entering its fifth legislative session. This year the Coalition is over 25 organizations strong (having started the first year with 8!) and is considering an exciting legislative package. Certainly we have made a lot of progress over the years toward bringing about equality, but there is still much to be done. As we go to print the final decisions as to what specific legislation will be in the WLAC package have not been made, but the following areas of concern (incomplete list) are under consideration for WLAC and will certainly be brought before the legislature in some form.

Occupational Safety In the Workplace. There is continuing concern to ensure that the workplace is safe for all. There will be a bill to require safety standards for Video Display Terminal Operators and a bill to clarify people's rights to pursue all legal options regarding sexual harassment.

Health Care/Health Insurance. There is much concern about the thousands of Mainers who do not have health insurance and about the ever increasing costs of providing that insurance. There will be many proposals from many perspectives to deal with this issue, but something will be done.

Affordable Housing. The issue of the lack of affordable housing to buy or rent is critical in all areas of the state. Again, it is clear that something will be done, proposals range from increasing available funds to creating land trusts for housing to providing shelter to the homeless.

(continued on page 2)

(Legislative Issues continued)

Reproductive Health and Freedom.

There are sure to be assaults on a woman's legal right to choose to terminate her pregnancy. These initiatives will include requiring parental consent for teens. On the positive side there will be an "Improved Family Communications" bill to actually help adults and teens learn to communicate about sexuality issues, and there will be efforts to secure adequate funding for family planning and prevention efforts.

Increasing Resources for Low income Families and Children.

There will be continuing efforts to raise the income standard for Maine's families and children. Currently a woman on AFDC earns about 75% of what it cost to live at the poverty level in 1979. To help, proposals include increasing AFDC payments, increasing the standard of need, and providing clothing and housing allowances. In addition there will be requests for additional funds to help the Women's, Infants' and Children's Program (WIC) deliver food provided by the federal government.

Insurance Reform. In addition to proposals to increase the availability of health insurance, there will be major efforts to resist "tort reform". To that end there will be proposals for a Consumer advocate on insurance issues, disclosure of insurance actuarial data, experienced based malpractice fees and a variety of other proposals to keep costs down fairly.

Care and Fairness for the Elderly.

These proposals include protection of medicaid patients in nursing homes and respite care for those who provide care for Alzheimer's patients.

Child Care. Child care continues to be a high priority on everyone's list. This year's proposals include child care for women in substance abuse treatment programs and increased efforts to create school-based child care for teen parents.

Violence Against Women. The statistics about the number of women and children who are sexually abused and/or assaulted continues to be alarming. This year there will be a major revision of the sexual assault statutes. There will also be proposals for funding to provide services to an increased number of victims of domestic violence.

Discrimination. Discrimination still exists in all forms and continues to have a harmful effect on everyone in our society. This year there are proposals to study the extent of sex discrimination in our schools and to prohibit discrimination against people on the basis of sexual orientation.

Support of Organizations Who Provide Direct Services and Advocacy for Women. There are proposals to increase the inadequate funding of organizations whose purpose is to help and advocate for those who need services. These organizations include Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Maine Commission for Women, Displaced Homemakers Project, and Legal Services for the Elderly.

The list of specific bills and proposals will be forthcoming. What will be necessary for these proposals to get proper consideration and for them to be successful is your participation. If you want more information on specific agenda items, or would like to visit the legislature or get involved in any way, please contact the MCW at 289-3417. Further, if you would like someone to come speak to your group regarding the legislative process or issues facing the 114th, please give us a call.

Over 2 million women are working full-time in jobs that pay wages below the poverty line. (In 1987 for a family of three the poverty wage was about \$9,100.)

"WE, THE PEOPLE: WOMEN'S DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE"

March 7, 1989

Room #113, State House, Augusta, Maine

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 8:30 - 9:00 | Registration |
| 9:00 - 9:25 | Welcome and Overview |
| 9:30 - 10:30 | Tour of State House, View Legislature in Session |
| 10:30 - 11:00 | Overview of Women's Legislative Agenda, 1989 |
| 11:00 - 12:30 | Workshops |
| 12:30 - 1:30 | Bag Lunch with Legislators |
| 1:30 - 2:30 | Observe Legislative Committee Hearings |
| 2:30 - 3:30 | Blaine House Reception Honoring Women Legislators and Policy Makers. |

*Gov. McKernan has been invited to meet the Presidents of Women's Organizations, Women Legislators and Leading Women in State Government.

WORKSHOPS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Economic Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Preserving Reproductive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> You Can Make A Difference: | <input type="checkbox"/> Choice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How to Lobby | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Policy: Taking the |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Running for Office: | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Affordable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panel of Legislators | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing |

(Please check Workshop preferences)

- Cost: ☐ \$3.00 Pre-Registration
☐ \$5.00 Registration at the Door.
☐ Bag Lunch \$5.00 (Optional, available only with pre-registration)

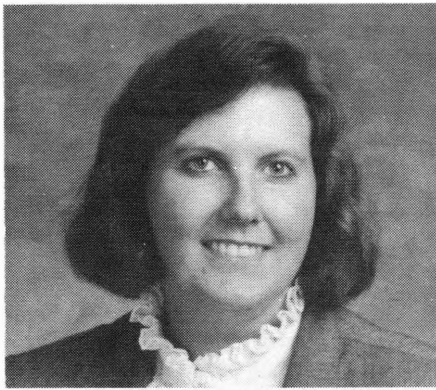
- ☐ Enclosed is \$_____ for _____ people.
☐ I need child care (Available through advance notification, no later than Feb. 22.).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Make check payable to Maine Commission for Women. Mail to MCW, State House Station # 93, Augusta, ME 04333. For information call 289-3417. Scholarship money is available.



PATRICIA C. BOURGOIN, Chair of MCW, is the owner of Word Processing Consulting and Services of Augusta. A Maine native, she received a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Maine and is a recent graduate of the New England Regional Leadership Training Pro-

gram. Active in both community and professional organizations, she is President-Elect of the Maine Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, founder and Chair of Maine Citizens Against Sexual abuse, Chair of the Gardiner Planning Board, Chair of the Gardiner Code Review Committee, member of the Board of Directors of the Gardiner Rotary Club and Public Relations Chair, and a member of the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce.

— Appointed by Gov. McKernan.

ELIZABETH P. LEVENSON of Portland, Vice Chair of the MCW, is the Assistant Director of the University of Southern Maine's Public Policy and Management Program. She also serves as Director of the University's Community Leadership Institute. Long active in community affairs, she has held leadership positions



with United Way, the League of Women Voters and the Center for Voluntary Action, as well as professional and volunteer positions in numerous local, state and national political campaigns.

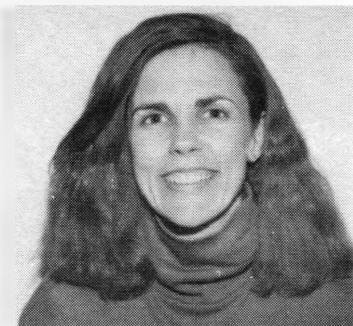
— Appointed by Gov. McKernan

MCW: WHO WE ARE

The Maine Commission for Women (MCW) is comprised of 17 individuals, nine of whom are appointed by the Governor, four by the President of the Senate, and four by the Speaker of the House. Originally created by Executive Order in 1964 as the Governor's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, the Commission was made a permanent agency by the Legislature in 1975. The MCW, which has two paid staff positions, was placed within the Executive Branch of the State Government.

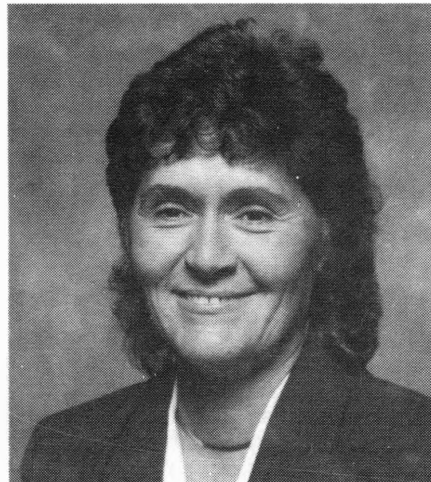
The mission of the Maine Commission for Women has been to take a lead role in the development, implementation, and evaluation of public policy at the State level in all areas of importance to the social, economic, legal, educational and personal well-being of Maine women and girls. This includes involvement at local and national levels when appropriate. In performing this role, the commission also seeks to: identify and research issues of importance to women; educate policy-makers and the public about these issues; act as an advocate for women and girls; and actively promote the increased participation of women in policy-making.

The work of the MCW is accomplished through its committee structure and through a small staff. It was not until 1979 that funds for staff were provided within the State's budget. Currently, the Commission employs two staff people, in addition to Executive Director Betsy Sweet.



F. CELESTE BRANHAM of Lewiston is Dean of Students at Bates College and is a former Chair of the MCW. A life-long Maine citizen, Celeste received her M.A. in Public Administration from the University of Mass., and served as federal Funds Coordinator in the Maine State Planning Office under two governors. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Maine Civil Liberties Union and is a member of the Maine chapter of the A.A.U.W. Celeste believes that part of her role as an educator is to persuade female students that their personal scholastic and professional opportunities are endless. MCW represents the most direct forum in which she can work to insure that those opportunities continue to be available to women. Celeste also regards MCW as an invaluable resource in speaking on behalf of the disadvantaged and the disenfranchised among us.

— Appointed by Speaker Martin.



YOLANDA BULLEY of Millinocket is currently an elementary school teacher and received both her B.A. and M.Ed. from the University of Maine. A life-long Maine citizen, Yolanda has taught middle and secondary school during her 20-year tenure as a public educator. She is an active member of the Maine Teachers Association and serves on the MCW with a special interest in education equity and aspiration building for young women. Married and the mother of an eight year old, Yolanda sees her participation in MCW as a way to serve the people of Maine, in particular the women and children whose best interests are not usually well served.

— Appointed by Senate President Pray.



LINDA S. CARD of Portland is a Systems Consultant with AT&T. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Community Alcohol Services and a member of the Junior League of Portland. A former Chair of the Woman to Woman Project, Linda is Alumni Vice President of the University of Maine class of 1978. She is also a member of the AAUW and the greater Portland Chapter of Alpha Omicron Pi Alumni. Linda wants to actively participate in the process of ensuring that women are treated fairly in the Legislature. She wants to work with MCW in promoting non-traditional job opportunities for women and developing programs which address the issue of women's self-esteem, which she believes to be fundamental to improving the social, economic, and political future of women.

— Appointed by Gov. McKernan.



JULIE NORTON CASHWELL of China, Chair of MCW's Women's History Month Committee, is currently a teacher of Junior High English at MSAD 49 in Fairfield. A native of Calais, Julie has long been active in women's issues, including the effort to pass a national and a state ERA. She is particularly concerned with equality in education both for students, teachers, and administrators. Julie sees the MCW as an excellent vehicle for studying issues relative to women's role in our society. Julie will receive a Master's in Educational Administration from the University of Maine in May and is the mother of two daughters.
— Appointed by Gov. McKernan

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At Press Time.



DIANE BENOIT DEERING of Hollis, Chair of the Legislative Committee of MCW, works locally in property management and was recently a candidate in District 14 for the Maine House of Representatives. Diane received her B.A. Degree in history and government from the Univ. of New Hampshire and has served as Youth Director of the East Congregational Church in Milton, Mass. and Dean of Women at the South Shore Congregational Conference at Geneva Point, N.H. She is active in community and service organizations including the Hollis Parent Teachers, Kennebec Girl Scout Council and serves as a delegate to the Saco River Corridor Commission. Diane and her husband David, Postmaster of Hollis, have three daughters, Liz, Abby and Emily.
— Appointed by Gov. McKernan.



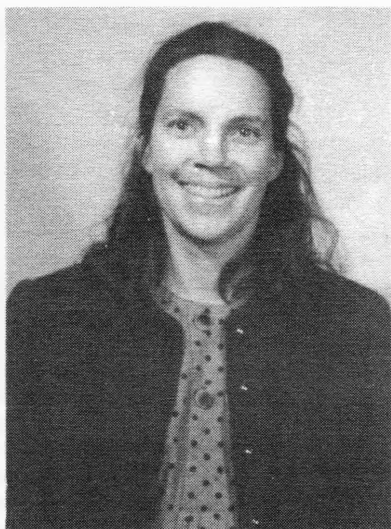
MARY R. CATHCART of Orono was recently elected as State Representative for District 129. A former MCW chair, Mary served for eleven years as a volunteer and staff member at Spruce Run, the battered women's project in Bangor. A member of the Orono Planning Board, the Orono chapter of A.A.U.W., and the Bangor area League of Women Voters, Mary believes in pursuing social change through the political process. Mary enjoys grass roots organizing and hopes to serve as a role model for women interested in getting politically active. She loves being involved with MCW and working with so many exciting and capable women.
— Appointed by Speaker Martin.



JOANNE D'ARCANGELO of Portland is a consultant specializing in organizational development and community relations who also serves as lobbyist for the Maine Women's Lobby. A former Director of the Maine Democratic party, Joanne has worked in a number of local, legislative, and statewide campaigns, and formerly served as Executive Assistant to the Senate President and the House Majority Leaders at the Maine Legislature. Joanne has most recently served as a member of the Portland YWCA Board of Directors, she has served on the MCW since 1984. Joanne joined MCW with an interest in encouraging greater participation by women in the political and governmental process. She cites the 1988 "Winning with Women" conference as among MCW's greatest accomplishments in that area, and intends to help the MCW exceed that success in working on its 1990 biennial political action conference.
— Appointed by Senate President Pray.



CAROLINE GENTILE of Presque Isle, Chair of MCW's Public Relations & Education Committee, is an Associate Professor of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, and holds the distinction as "Dean" of the Commission as a member of the MCW since 1978. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Presque Isle Recreation Association, and is active in the B.P.W., A.A.U.W., Delta Kappa Gamma, and the Maine and American Associations for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. Caroline believes the MCW is a vital link and a powerful avenue for the study, and implementation through recommendations/legislation of women's issues. She hopes the MCW will look to the continued growth/development of the Regional Commissions which she believes will provide the grass roots information critical to the work of the Commission.
— Appointed by Speaker Martin.



ANNE H. STICKNEY HEIMANN of Yarmouth is Vice President and Treasurer of D.I.C/Deering Family Restaurants. Anne, who has both a B.S. and an M.B.A. from Babson College, is also an active volunteer with the Maderia School and currently serves as Chair of the Regional Representatives and is Second Vice President of the Alumnae Council. A Board member and Vice President of the Catherine Morrill Day Nursery in Portland, Anne's principle interest in working with MCW is to improve the lives of women, both in the workplace and in the home.

— Appointed by Gov. McKernan.



BRENDA HUMPHREY of Portland is a journalist and community organizer. A native of North Carolina, Brenda attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. Prominent in state and national politics, it was living in Liberia from 1974 to 1976 that introduced Brenda to the complex issues of mother/child health care. In Liberia, where infant mortality rates were amongst the world's highest, things only began to change when women themselves began to organize. Brenda believes that women coming together to work on women's issues is the best direction for women to take and that is why she is active with MCW. In addition to mother/child health care issues, of particular interest to Brenda are the many women who are caught in endless cycles of victimization and abuse.

— Appointed by Speaker Martin.



RENA MURPHY of Millinocket is a ward secretary in the Millinocket Regional Hospital. A grass roots organizer, she is active in the struggle to get post secondary education, both academic and vocational, in the Millinocket area. Rena is currently working full-time while nursing her husband back to health following a stroke. She sees MCW as a way to make people aware of how difficult it is for women in the work force, especially given the competing demands on their energies. Rena believes MCW can effectively work with other women's advocacy groups to push for changes to improve women's lives.

— Appointed by Senate President Pray.



MARION ALEXANDER HIGGINS of Presque Isle, Chair of the Regional Commissions Committee of MCW, is District Office Manager for Congresswoman Olympia J. Snowe and has been active in women's and community organizations, establishing a women's network first in Sacramento, CA. and then in Presque Isle. She has served as Vice President of the Aroostook Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, is an active member of the Pioneer Playhouse at U.M.P.I., is one of the first women admitted to the Presque Isle Kiwanis Club, and is a weekly columnist for the Fort Fairfield Review. Marion is particularly interested in representing the issues of Northern Maine women in MCW.

— Appointed by Gov. McKernan.



STEPHANIE LOCKE of Sebec is Training Program Coordinator for the Maine AFL-CIO. She currently works to coordinate services for displaced workers. A former R.N. and past member of the Maine House of Representatives from 1976-84, Stephanie is a member of the Board of Trustees of Foxcroft Academy and a member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. She is on the Board of Directors of the Literacy Volunteers of Maine, is on the Maine Council on Vocational Education, and was part of the planning committee for the second and third annual "Living with AIDS in Maine" conferences. Stephanie recognizes, through her work and as a mother of three, the necessity of protecting the rights women have and the need to fight to secure those still to be won. She believes the MCW to be a key organization in this struggle.

— Appointed by Senate President Pray.



MYRT WILLEY of Gardiner, the owner of T. W. Dick Co., Inc., is Vice Chair of Gov. McKernan's Business Advisory Committee and is on the Board of Corporators of the Gardiner Savings Bank. She is Chair of the Associated General Contractors of America/National Association of Women in Construction Liaison Committee. In addition, Myrt is a member of the National Association of Female Executives, Owners and Executives of the U.S.A., and is on the Steering Committee of the Maine Society of Entrepreneurs. Myrt believes in a more visible MCW, representative of all women in Maine. Much of Myrt's life has been dedicated to helping women in one way or another. Myrt hopes the MCW will be one more vehicle for doing just that.

— Appointed by Gov. McKernan.

New England Association of Commissions for Women Meets

The New England Association of Commissions for Women met in October at our Annual Conference to share successful state strategies that have helped bring about equality for women and their families. Every New England state was represented and we were each asked to present "How To" workshops on successful events or organizing efforts. The MCW is among the most active and productive commissions and we were asked to present three workshops: Enacting a Family Medical Leave Law, Establishing Regional Commissions and the formation and operation of the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition. Other states shared success strategies for establishing employer sponsored child care, addressing the challenge of women with disabilities, creating an excellent photo exhibit of working women, and Vermont thrilled us with their 3 day/5,000 person "Women's State Fair." Regional ties were strengthened at the meeting and everyone felt inspired and better equipped to return to our home states. The highlight of the conference was an address by Dr. Ronnie Steinberg (Temple University) who gave us a ten year perspective on Pay Equity. An article based on her remarks follows.

PAY EQUITY; A TEN YEAR RETROSPECTIVE

At the New England Regional Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women, Professor Ronnie Steinberg of Temple University delivered an overview of the last ten years of the struggle to achieve pay equity for women and minorities. Her startling conclusion: "In my opinion the implementation of pay equity is falling far short of achieving pay equity as we originally envisioned." Steinberg noted that despite impressive gains nationwide in both the public and the private sector, pay equity is still a remote hope for most working women. With that, Steinberg proceeded to analyze why pay equity achievements have fallen far short of goals and to suggest approaches to the process more likely to deliver results in keeping with the original spirit of the struggle.

"The implementation of pay equity is falling far short of achieving pay equity as we originally envisioned."

As a first step Steinberg insisted on the necessity of seeing the process of achieving equity as not so much technical as political: "In short, although decisions about compensation are not entirely arbitrary, decisions about what is valuable

and by how much is not as objective, nor technical, nor inaccessible as management makes it out to be." Steinberg goes on to clarify this point by noting that "compensation decisions happen in a highly political context: where those with more power – and here I use this word to mean access to control over decision making – end up having jobs with more valuable characteristics. Then these people go on to shape the way we think (e.g. working with money more important than working with people) in part by calling in experts who give these decisions the aura of objectivity.

The bottom line in both agenda setting and implementation is that pay equity has to be viewed from start to finish as a struggle for control over decision making, therefore women must not relinquish control in bargaining

- to job evaluation consulting firms on assumption that they understand wage discrimination
- to policy makers, whether feminist insiders or personnel representatives
- to unions, even if they argue that they should make decisions because they are the elected representative of the women who will benefit from reform.

"Decisions about what is valuable and by how much is not as objective, nor technical, nor inaccessible as management makes it out to be."

Steinberg summed up her point by saying "proponents of pay equity can't pass a law, even a good one, appropriate money, even a sufficient amount, and go home and let others bargain for them, hire consultants for them, implement for them, and they can't allow themselves to be pushed aside without putting up a good public fight."

This, according to Steinberg, is not happening. Proponents of pay equity need to be able to recognize a number of effective tactics used by management to thwart just settlements:

- political decisions are turned into technical decisions which are in turn made inaccessible to those who would benefit from the reform
- information is withheld making it impossible to come up with a counter-proposal of sufficient detail to be treated with any degree of seriousness
- proponents are pushed out politically, or (even more effective) placed in a minority position or constrained in a process of decision-making
- other political agendas that management has been wanting for some time – like a new job evaluation system, or contracting out for health care work, or red circling – are piggybacked onto this reform, letting it appear, for instance, that it is because of women

that the position of male workers has been made more insecure.

"Proponents of pay equity - - can't allow themselves to be pushed aside without putting up a good public fight."

In closing Steinberg gave the following very practical advice on the actual mechanics of bargaining for pay equity:

1. If you don't have a study, don't do it: there are enough studies around to borrow from; they all fall far short of pay equity; you might as well get the 10 - 15% without the two years of hassle and delay.
 2. Watch the details, they can have serious consequences for wage adjustments.
 3. If you are involved in a technical study, hire an independent technical consultant to protect your interests – review of the study does not have to take that much time. The few thousand you spend could save you and women millions in equity adjustments.
 4. Make sure there is at least one proponent involved in the initiative for whom pay equity is a full-time sole concern.
 5. If you are losing control don't be afraid to stop the initiative or go public.
 6. Do not allow management to turn a pay equity initiative into a classification study.
 7. Build coalitions and task forces with full and equal participation of feminist proponents.
 8. Make sure that no employee salaries will be downgraded as a result of the study.
 9. Make sure that undervaluation due to race discrimination is examined at the same time as undervaluation due to sex.
- In order to create a new consensus on the revaluation of work traditionally performed by women and minorities Steinberg insists that the first task must be to define pay equity in our own terms and not defensively in relation to the opposition: "we must debate pay equity by confronting the myth of the free market and by identifying instead who actually makes decisions about wages, and who actually benefits. This consensus will emerge, not when policy makers accept the intrinsic validity of the arguments we are making and embrace the significance of skills and responsibilities associated with female and minority work, but, rather, when it is politically impossible for them not to agree with us, when the cost of opposing us proves greater than the cost of doing it our way!"

– Sadhbh Neilan

WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS CONFERENCE

The overwhelmingly positive response to the Maine's First Women Business Owners Conference reinforces WBDC's premise that the time has come to recognize and actively promote women ownership in small businesses! Approximately 350 people participated in the one day event on October 19th at the Augusta Civic Center. The conference was held in conjunction with National Women in Business Week, and in Maine, Governor John R. McKernan, Jr. proclaimed Conference Day **Maine Women Business Owners Day**.

Governor McKernan recognized the economic significance of women business ownership in a welcoming letter to conference participants:

"In recent years, women have been starting businesses at a rate two or three times faster than that of men, and their share of business ownership has increased from five percent in 1972 to thirty percent today. By the year 2000, women are projected to own one half of the businesses in the United States. This conference is testimony to the growing importance of women's businesses and to the increased significance of their role in local, state and national economics. It is also a vote of confidence in the future of women's enterprise and in the talents, skills and determination that women bring to their business activity."

Barbara Holz, SBA Special Assistant, welcomed participants to the conference and talked about the increasing role of women in business ownership. Ms. Holz highlighted the efforts of the SBA to promote women business ownership, pointing out that every SBA district office has a women's business ownership representative who is responsible for ensuring that women are aware of SBA's programs and for assisting women clients of SBA.

"By the year 2000, women are projected to own one-half of the businesses in the United States."

— Gov. McKernan

The conference provided an arena for the discussion of issues related to women's business ownership. Keynote speaker Michaela Walsh of Women's World Banking stated that the worldwide inability of women to obtain financing is the greatest barrier facing women who want to start their own business. Michaela is president and founder of Women's World Banking, an international organization created in 1979. WWB was born out of the International Women's Conference held in Mexico in 1975, is presently headquartered in New York, spans 41 countries and is rapidly expanding. Its purpose is to help women own and operate their own businesses through a global network. WWB

CALENDAR

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| January 21 | "What is Our Future? Reproductive Freedom and the U.S. Supreme Court." Speaker Sara Weddington, Esq. Kresge Auditorium, 3:30 p.m., Bowdoin College, Brunswick. |
| March 7 | "We, The People ." Women's Day in the Legislature. State House, Augusta. |
| April 6 - 7 | 10th Annual Women in Management Conference
Holiday Inn By The Sea, Portland
Keynote Speakers - Eleanor Holmes Norton and Marjorie Longley. For more information, call Dept. of Community Programs, USM, Tel. 874-6500. |
| April 9 | March for Women's Equality, Women's Lives. Washington, D.C. |
| April 10 | Governor's Second Annual Child Care Conference. Augusta, Maine. |
| June 16 | Maine Commission for Women - Annual Meeting. Civic Center, Augusta. |

operates through a system of local affiliates to provide selected clients with a support system which includes legal and other necessary advice, as well as assistance in obtaining loans.

Ms. Walsh said, "that since beginning eight years ago, Women's World Banking

has backed 35,000 loans worth \$10 million. And our default rate is less than 1 percent." She also pointed out the organization was founded to prove to banks that women are not a high credit risk. Ms. Walsh told conference participants, "We can see ourselves as women sharing resources. You are a woman in business, you deserve to be recognized."

Luncheon speaker, Sharon Mitchell shared her feelings on the most difficult issues faced by women in business; "The single most difficult business issue for me that is an issue for women only has been the isolation. Frequently still, although somewhat less so, I am the only woman at the meeting or conference." The other problem I have encountered, which I believe is unique to women, is that you have to work harder to be taken seriously. However, I have found that this can, in competitive situations, work to your advantage."

Sharon Mitchell is president of Ariel, Inc., a real estate investment firm located in Augusta. Their present, most visible project is Key Plaza in downtown Augusta. Ariel, Inc. is also involved in a variety of other businesses and residential development projects in the mid-Maine area. Mitchell, in her closing remarks, reinforced the spirit of the Conference, "Our economy and this country can only be strengthened by greater participation of women in the economy through business ownership. Economically and politically, this country has much to gain by our full participation."

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"No, it wasn't difficult getting a seat on the flight at all. The airlines have this cute policy of reserving a seat for the captain."

DANIEL IN CORMOPOLITAN

WINNING WITH WOMEN, CONTINUED

As long as male voters continue to accept and defend the status quo, there will continue to be a gender gap. That voting and opinion gap does not reflect the views of all women, but its breadth and depth is unquestionable, and it will continue to grow until the majority views of women prevail. I believe that eventually the different thinking of women will register in the consciousness of men as well, and then the gap will narrow. I look forward to that day.

—Bella Abzug, *Gender Gap* (1984)

Last November's election proved, once again, that women's votes count! On the national scene many attributed Dukakis' early lead in the presidential polls to his massive lead with women voters. Then, as Eleanor Smeal notes in her latest report, following his nomination, Dukakis "ignored the gender gap issues of peace (or less military spending and more negotiations), social/domestic programs, and women's rights." Smeal argues that Dukakis, in going to the right "in hot pursuit of Southern Democrats or Reagan Democrats — both terms frequently used as euphemisms for white males," lost the gender advantage he had in the summer, and so lost the election.

Women's votes are also thought to have provided the winning margin in three U.S. Senate races. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) defeated Republican Pete Dawkins with a gender gap of 8%. Nevada's current Governor and Senator elect, Richard Bryan, went to the polls with a winning four point lead amongst women voters (versus a two point lead among men) against Republican Chic Hecht. In a major election upset Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) beat incumbent Senator Lowell Weicker. An ABC poll attributed Lieberman's victory to his greater support amongst women.

In Maine, Olympia Snowe, co-chair of the Women's Congressional Caucus, scored her sixth substantial victory and will once again represent Maine's second congressional district in Washington. In state elections an unprecedented number of women were elected to the Maine Legislature: ten to the Senate, for a total of 28%; forty-seven to the House, for a total of 31%. With Nancy Clark as Democratic Majority Leader in the Senate, Mary Clark Webster as Republican Minority Leader in the House, and Pam Cahill as assistant Minority Leader in the Senate, women are finally being represented in leadership in proportion to their numbers. Members of the Commission were especially delighted at the election of long term Commissioner and former chair of the Commission, Mary Cathcart to represent District 129 in the House.

Maine's election record in relation to women is immensely more progressive than that of the nation as a whole. Nationally less than 5% of the Members of Congress are women. The U.S. lags behind virtually all western Democracies in the percentage of women in their national parliaments or congresses (Yes, I do mean Spain, Portugal, Italy, Ireland, etc.). In state legislatures women's participation is higher, however few states can match Maine's track record. Undoubtedly MCW's work in raising women's awareness of the importance of the political process is in part responsible for Maine women's more active participation in political life.

Now the political task before us is to insure that women's issues are prioritized in the next legislative session. Last year the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition (WLAC) scored a remarkable 87% success rate with its legislative initiatives. On the Saturday before last November's election the Commission spearheaded a WLAC statewide drive urging women to vote — which included the distribution of 10,000 leaflets in grocery bags. It is time to once again join forces with that dynamic coalition and work together to leave our mark on the 114th Legislature.

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